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PLUCK AND LUCK

STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

HARRY E. WOLFF, PUBLISHER, INC., 166 WEST 23D STREET, NEW YORK

No. 1345

NEW YORK, MARCH 12, 1924

Price 8 Cents

THE BOY MESSENGER OF RUSSIA; OR, THE CZAR'S SECRET DESPATCH BEARER.

By ALLAN ARNOLD.
AND OTHER STORIES



Nicholas had observed the cross on the young nobleman's breast, and he said more deferentially, as he presented the warrant: "Here is the document, respected sir. You will find it all in legal form, I assure you."

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Issued weekly—Subscription price, \$4.00 per year; Canada, \$4.50; Foreign, \$5.00. Harry E. Wolff, Publisher, Inc., 166 West 23d Street, New York, N. Y. Entered as Second-Class Matter, February 10, 1913, at the Post-Office at New York, N. Y. under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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The Boy Messenger of Russia

OR, THE CZAR'S SECRET DESPATCH BEARER

By **ALLAN ARNOLD**

CHAPTER I.—The Boy Messenger's Peril.

"Not guilty!"

The youthful prisoner lifted his head and looked straight into the eyes of the judge with a fearless expression of conscious innocence in his glance. The lad was Ivan Madro, well known in the Russian metropolis as "The Boy Messenger of Russia." Ivan was the youngest of all the couriers in the service of the czar, Alexander II, and many were the reports of his bravery and fidelity which had been made public, so that Ivan was somewhat of a hero in the estimation of the people. But now a terrible accusation hung suspended over the head of the young hero, like a veritable sword of Damocles, which threatened to fall and destroy him.

Through a strange and fateful combination of untoward circumstances, which the necessities of our narrative do not involve, the dreadful accusation of having slain an aged Jewish money-lender named Isaacs, and robbed him of the sum of 30,000 roubles, had been brought against Ivan. As Ivan pleaded "not guilty," more than one voice murmured an approval, and Mira Madro, the lad's sister, a sweet faced young girl of sixteen who was present, bent upon her only brother a glance full of hope and affection, which he returned with an encouraging smile.

Ivan and Mira were orphans; their mother died when Mira was very young, and their father, Vladimir Madro, mysteriously disappeared five years since, and a dead body, supposed to be his remains, had been found in the river. Thus Ivan and his sister were left alone and in poverty. But from the time of the brave lad's successful volunteer courier service he had been retained as a czar's courier, and as his remuneration was considerable, he was enabled to provide Mira with all the necessities and many of the luxuries of life. The brother and sister were devoted to each other, and, indeed, their affection was often a matter of comment among their neighbors, all of whom respected and loved them. When finally the evidence of prosecution was all in, the judge addressed Ivan, and commenced his examination in a formal manner, his first question being:

"Where were you, Ivan Madro, on the night of the tenth instant, between the hours of eight and

eleven o'clock, during which time, as has been established, the crime of which you are accused was committed?"

For a moment Ivan was silent, and the expression upon his noble features told his mind was occupied with a powerful mental struggle. At last Ivan spoke, and his words came with an incisive intonation as he said:

"I positively refuse to answer that question."

A thrill of surprise ran through the assemblage, and Mira sank back in her seat with a low, gasping moan, while a man who sat behind her regarded her with a strange, exultant look in his dark flashing eyes.

"If you could exculpate yourself you would speak. We must therefore regard it as conceded that anything you could say would be inimical to yourself," said the judge, in conclusion.

Something like a groan escaped Ivan then, but he compressed his lips into a bloodless line, and maintained a determined silence. The truth was, the heroic youth was thus strangely speechless, because on the night of the crime, and at the time when it was perpetrated, he was present at a meeting of the secret order, called "The Sons of Liberty." The association was in sympathy with the Nihilists, and really a branch of that order, but its members did not advocate bloodshed, and they hope to free Russia by legitimate means.

Moreover, among the persons present at the last meeting of "The Sons of Liberty" was one Leo Avondroff, a distinguished young student and a daring Nihilist, who was Ivan's dearest friend, and the lover of his sister, the beautiful Mira, though these facts were a secret. Ivan knew that Leo was even then in hiding in the city, and he foresaw that if he revealed that Leo had attended the meeting every road leading from St. Petersburg would be guarded, and a search instituted by the police which would probably result in Leo's capture. The boy messenger felt that it would break his sister's heart if Leo was executed or sent to the terrible prison-mines of Siberia, and so he held his peace with stolid heroism.

The result could be foreseen. Ivan was convicted of the crime of which he was accused.

But as the unjust verdict was rendered the boy messenger sprang to his feet.

"Before I was taken away from this courtroom I wish for the last time to protest that I am innocent of the crime of which I have been convicted. Heaven witness my truth!" he cried, fervently.

Mira was in agony. She clasped her small hands, and looked up to heaven as she murmured a prayer for Ivan's deliverance, and she said:

"Oh, mercy, mercy! I would give my life to save my poor, innocent brother."

Mira's words were a faint whisper, but they were heard by the swarthy man behind her, to whom we have incidentally alluded. His eyes brightened again, the eager exultant expression on his face deepened, and leaning quickly, he whispered in Mira's ear sibilantly:

"Do you mean that, sweet Mira?"

The young girl faced the man who had addressed her, with a quick turn, and she looked alarmed and startled as she saw him, then she drew away as she uttered doubtfully:

"You spoke to me, Count Michael Petrevitch?"

"Yes, I asked you if you were sincere, if you really meant you would give your life to save your brother?" he replied.

"Yes; oh, he must not die."

"Meet me in the ante-room, perhaps I may save him yet," said the Russian nobleman, and he glided out of the courtroom before Mira could voice the surprise which his unexpected words occasioned her.

The young girl feared and distrusted Count Petrevitch, for he had persecuted her with his attentions, and openly avowed his admiration. Her womanly instinct warned her against the dissolute nobleman, and she had repulsed all his advances. As soon as Petrevitch found Mira in his presence with no one to see or hear, he said:

"Mira, upon one condition I will save your brother's life. Promise you will be mine, and I vow to you by all that I hold most sacred that Ivan shall be fully cleared from the least imputation of guilt."

"Oh, I cannot promise as you wish; I love another. Have mercy, Count Petrevitch! Save my brother and Heaven will reward you, for Ivan is innocent," cried Mira, and in her agony and despair she knelt at the villain's feet.

"No, no. You must be mine, my wife, Mira. Come, come. In a moment it may be too late. You will not send your brother to his doom when a word from you can save him?" replied the wily Petrevitch.

Mira started to her feet. Her lovely face was as white as the spotless snow, but her great lustrous eyes were as brilliant as diamonds with the light of resolve.

"Heaven forgive you! I cannot see my brother die. I promise. Count Petrevitch, save my brother and I will be your wife, though I am heartbroken," she said.

"Come," replied Petrevitch. "You shall see how powerful I am, sweet Mira. But stay. Do not follow me too closely lest suspicion shall be awakened in the minds of the spectators."

Thus speaking, Petrevitch preceded the maiden into the courtroom. Mira presently followed him. As Mira and Count Petrevitch re-entered the courtroom the judge was engaged in sum-

ming up the evidence in the case, and in making the recapitulation of the same.

"And now it becomes my duty to pronounce the decree of the court. Ivan Madro, arise."

The boy messenger had become seated a few moments previously, and he at once regained his feet as the judge spoke. The young hero faced the man who was about to announce his doom without a tremor, and, speaking very slowly and impressively, the judge continued:

"The sentence of the court is that you, Ivan Madro, be publicly executed on the——"

At that instant there came a startling interruption.

CHAPTER II.—An Order from the Czar.

"Hold, I command you!" cried a clear, resonant voice, and a splendidly formed young man with a face of striking beauty vaulted over the railing that separated the inclosure set apart for the officers of the court from the audience.

The daring intruder confronted the judge defiantly for an instant, and then a dozen voices shouted:

"He is Leo Avondroff, the Nihilist!"

The attendant officers of the police sprang forward, and two of them grasped the young Nihilist, upon whose head a price was set, and who had been hunted fruitlessly by them for months.

"Leo! lost! lost!" shrieked Mira, and she fell forward in a dead faint as she saw her lover in the clutches of the blood-hounds of the czar.

"Ha! you have come to surrender yourself," said the judge, as soon as his surprise permitted him to speak.

"I have come to save an innocent man," replied Leo Avondroff, firmly, and Ivan, who was much astounded at the sudden advent of his friend, felt his heart leap, and under his breath he murmured:

"True heart! Noble fellow! He would not see me sacrificed."

"What do you mean by the unreasonable declaration you have just made?" demanded the judge of Leo Avondroff, sternly.

"What I say!" he said calmly. "I can prove the innocence of Ivan Madro even to the satisfaction of this unjust court of a tyrant's minions," said Leo, excitedly, as the thought of the wrongs that had been done there came to his mind.

"Treason!" exclaimed one of the gendarmes.

"And uttered by a patriot who had hoped to help free poor, oppressed Russia!" cried Leo, enthusiastically. "But listen to my evidence of the innocence of Ivan Madro, the accused. At the time of the crime Ivan was in a certain house here in St. Petersburg. I was also present, and I swear Ivan did not leave the house during the hours when the crime of which this court has convicted him was committed," continued Leo.

The judge smiled incredulously, and he said sneeringly:

"This is a mere plot to save the accused. I think now that it is clear Ivan is a Nihilist, as well as yourself, and hence your desire to serve him."

"I have a witness," replied Leo quickly, and

turning to a well-known officer of the police, whose devotion to the czar and excellent service for many years had established his character beyond all suspicion, he whispered in a thrilling, intense voice:

"Brodroff, remember your vow the night I saved your life when you were freezing on the snow-clad steppes in Siberia."

"I will keep my vow," replied the officer of the secret police in the same low tones.

"This man's word you will not doubt. Brodroff, the czar's spy, is my witness!" then cried Leo. Brodroff stepped forward.

"What means this, officer? Can it be the Nihilist speaks the truth?" said the judge.

"It is the truth, I can substantiate or corroborate the young man's evidence," answered Brodroff.

The judge was taken aback, but he said:

"Explain yourself, officer!"

"Yes, your honor. The fact is, on the night of the crime I visited the house where Leo Avondroff asserts that Ivan Madro passed the evening while the deed of which he is convicted was done. A meeting of Nihilists was held at the house in question, and I was spying on the place. I saw Ivan Madro enter the house, and he remained there while the crime must have been accomplished. Therefore he is an innocent man."

Thus said the police spy.

"And why have you kept silent about this matter until now?" demanded the judge.

"It is no fault of mine that I have not spoken sooner, your honor. The very night of the murder, and before I heard of the crime, I was sent on a mission to Orenburg. I have only just returned, and I did not enter the courtroom until about five minutes since," replied the police officer.

After this a short consultation was held between the judge and the other court officers. The evidence of the police spy was conclusive, and so the judge announced that in view of the same the decree of the court as regarded Ivan's guilt of the crime of which he had been convicted was revoked. A shout of delight went up from the audience, most of whom were in sympathy with the boy messenger. Mira had been lifted from the floor by kindly hands, and she had revived in time to hear the judge revoke the verdict against Ivan. But she thought:

"Now I am freed from my promise to Count Petrevitch, for Ivan is saved without his intervention. Ah, to be his wife! It would be a fate worse than death to me."

But the next words uttered by the judge told Mira that she was not to escape her promise to the villainous court thus easily.

"Though cleared of the crime for which he has been tried, Ivan Madro is convicted of being a Nihilist by his presence at their meeting, and the devotion evinced by Leo Avondroff in surrendering himself to save the young messenger—such devotion the Nihilists are bound to show each other—and with Leo Avondroff, Ivan Madro shall go to end his days in the prison-mines of Siberia."

As she saw that the attention of everyone near was turned she looked for Count Petrevitch, and she discovered him at her side. He had stealthily approached but a moment previously.

As she saw that the attention of everyone near was turned to the proceedings of the court, Mira whispered to Petrevitch, saying:

"Will you save him yet?"

"I will. But the other is doomed. I watched you. I saw you fall, and now I know your secret. Leo Avondroff is my rival, and he shall go to a living death in the Siberian prison mines," replied Petrevitch.

He was an astute man, possessed of great fertility of resources, and quick to devise expedients. Now he proved this by advancing and addressing the judge in these words:

"Your honor, Ivan Madro is not a Nihilist. There has been a great injustice done here. I have a secret communication to make to you."

Petrevitch ascended the raised dais and whispered to the judge:

"Ivan Madro is a loyal subject of the czar. He was present at the meeting of the Nihilists by my order to act as a spy. For some time he has been a secret agent of the third section."

"Why did he not say so?" said the judge.

"Do you not see? The boy messenger is shrewd beyond his years. He played the part of a Nihilist keeping the oath of secrecy even when in peril of his life, that he might decoy Leo Avondroff into the power of the police. Such was the plan Ivan and I formed, when the accusation of the police was brought against him. But of course the police were sincere in thinking Ivan guilty of the Jew's death. Only the lad and myself were in the secret of his presence at the meeting of the Nihilists."

"I see it all. It was a grand plot. I shall issue an order for Ivan's release at once. He is a favorite with the czar, and I am sure our emperor will be glad to hear of his innocence," said the judge.

At sunset the judge's order for the release of Ivan was brought to the prison by a gendarme, and the great doors were opened for the lad, and he passed out to freedom. Ivan had been separated from Leo when they were brought to the prison, and therefore he did not see him when the news of his release came. But Ivan had not gone far when he heard someone coming swiftly after him, and a hearty, honest sounding voice called out:

"Stay, Ivan, I have a message for you!"

Turning, the youth saw a tall, stately Cossack, clad in uniform of the imperial guards, whom he recognized as one of the czar's personal escort.

"You are commanded to report for duty at the winter palace without a moment's delay. By order of the czar."

"The royal master's will is my law. I will return to the palace with you," replied Ivan, and then he and the royal guard changed their course, and walked rapidly.

Upon arriving at the entrance of the palace Ivan saw his posting sledge drawn by three stout shaggy Siberian steeds, whose metal and speed he had tested in many a long and perilous journey over the snow-clad steppes, standing at the door and Peter Narki, the young messenger's faithful yemshick, or driver, who had accompanied him on all his travels as a courier of the czar, sat in the sledge muffled in furs, holding the restive horses while, after the manner of his

class, he talked to his team as he would to a man, now tender, and then, as they tugged at the bits, calling them all manner of names.

The young messenger was at once conducted into the imperial reception-room. Upon one side of the spacious chamber a file of the royal body-guard, tall, splendid-looking men, attired in brilliant uniforms, and holding their long swords, presented as in salute, stood like a line of statues, while at the door were two other guards, who stepped aside to allow Ivan to pass. A moment after the boy messenger entered the audience room the rich curtains which hung across the interior door parted, and Alexander the Second, "Emperor of all the Russias," strode into the apartment.

Alexander came from an interview with an officer of the secret police, and before recounting what now passed between the czar and his boy messenger, we must acquaint the reader with the nature of the business which the emissary of "the third section" had with the emperor. An hour previously, and just after the czar had received the news of Ivan's complete exculpation, and the information that the youth had so cleverly performed the part of a police spy that he had led Leo Avondroff, the denounced Nihilist, to come within reach of arrest, one Morrisco, a member of General Mellifloff's detective brigade, sought audience. Upon being introduced into the presence of the czar, Morrisco made a strange, alarming revelation.

CHAPTER III.—On the Way to Siberia.

The interview between the czar and Morrisco was strictly private, and when, after the formalities attendant upon an audience with the emperor were over, the latter said:

"And now, good Morrisco, let me hear what you have to communicate of so great importance that you besought my attention at this hour, where ordinarily no one is received here?"

"Pardon my importunity, but, your royal highness, I will come straight to the point, and inform you that we have at length actually discovered that the suspicion which you are aware we have entertained for some time that there was a secret society of nobles who are plotting against the government is well founded."

"Give me your proofs," demanded the czar.

"I will do so, noble sire. The facts are these: One Paul Metternich by name, an exile at the prison mines at Timsk, in Siberia, confessed on his deathbed in the mines that there was a plot formed by a secret organization of nobles to depose our noble czar. Metternich stated that he was informed of this by a fellow prisoner in the mines, exile No. 104. The latter made the revelation in the confidence of friendship in such a way that Metternich dying would stake his soul on its truth."

"Ah, there may be truth in this," said the czar.

"There is. For Metternich further said that exile No. 104 claimed that his banishment to Siberia was due to the machinations of the secret order of nobles. He had discovered the names of the treacherous nobles, and he was seized and spirited away to Siberia without trial. The emissaries of the secret order having charged him

with being a Nihilist, he was informed that if he ever breathed a word about the secret order its members would take a terrible vengeance upon his two children, whom he left behind him in St. Petersburg, and who believed that he was dead, and had no suspicion that he had been sent to Siberia."

"What is the real name of this man who is known at the prison mines only as exile No. 104?" queried the czar.

Morrisco drew forth a paper and presented it, saying:

"There, opposite the No. 104 is the exile's name."

The czar read the name of the exile who had suddenly become a personage of great importance aloud, thus:

"Vladimer Madro!"

Then he added:

"That man must at once be brought from the mines to St. Petersburg, and he shall reveal who the treacherous nobles are. I shall give him a full pardon and a splendid reward if his information leads to the conviction of the traitors."

"It will be necessary to send a courier to the mines, sir, with an order to the governor to bring the exile to St. Petersburg," said Morrisco.

"True. And Ivan, my brave boy messenger, shall carry my order to the mines. Ah! no doubt you have heard that he was cleared of the crime he was accused of."

Morrisco bowed an assent, and he added:

"I would suggest, your highness, that the utmost secrecy be maintained regarding the nature of Ivan's mission."

"And whvfore so much secrecy? Ah! I see you fear the secret traitors!"

"Yes, sir. They are bold and desperate men. Let them once suspect that you mean to bring Exile No. 104 to the city and they will dare any danger to foil your royal purpose."

"Well said, good Morrisco. It shall be as you advise. My order shall be a secret dispatch. Ivan shall receive instructions to guard it even with his life, and I will send one of the royal guards to the fortress to bring the boy messenger here at once. He shall start for Siberia within an hour."

"I have nothing further to communicate at present," said the police official, and bowing low he went out from the presence of the ruler of Russia without turning his back.

The czar touched a silver bell, and in response to its chime the royal private secretary entered, and at the czar's dictation the man wrote an order commanding that Exile No. 104 be immediately sent to St. Petersburg under guard. When this was done Alexander signed the document and stamped it with the imperial eagle. The dispatch was written upon the finest paper in very fine characters, and when it was in complete readiness the Czar took from a desk a silver rifle bullet. The bullet was hollow, and, by turning it, unscrewed it in the middle. With his own hand the czar pressed the dispatch into the bullet and screwed it up again. It was so neatly made that the secret of its construction could not easily be discovered.

When the czar entered the presence of Ivan, the boy messenger, he carried in his hand a large

envelope, in which he had placed the bullet containing the secret dispatch.

"Ivan, this envelope contains a secret dispatch of vital importance, which is concealed in a hollow bullet. When you are alone you will remove the bullet from the envelope and conceal it upon your person. The dispatch must be delivered to the governor of the prison mines at Timsk as speedily as possible, and on your life I charge you let no one, save the officer for whom it is intended, discover it. Your sledge is at the door. Upon leaving the palace you will not delay an instant, you start at once for Siberia."

"Your order shall be obeyed, sire," replied the youth, and then the czar signaled him to withdraw.

Hastening from the palace, Ivan entered his sledge. In the vehicle he found the fur suit he wore when on his journeys, and hastily donning coat, cap, and knee-boots, he bade Peter say he had sent his young master's message to her. The sledge dashed away.

Meanwhile, as Morrisco left the presence of the czar, a swarthy Muscovite who had been crouching at the door through which the emperor came, and who had heard all that had passed between the police officer and Alexander, stole away and hastened to the palace of Count Petrevitch, who immediately received him and heard him repeat what had been said by Morrisco and the czar.

"By all the saints, all our lives are in deadly peril! Nicholas, the Tartar bravo, shall be sent after the boy messenger at once. He shall take the secret dispatch from Ivan, and then post on ahead of the boy to the prison mines and bring about the death of Vladimer Madro before he can reveal our names!" cried Petrevitch.

"It is evident that the czar and the police do not know all the truth about Valdimir Madro," said the other.

"No; Valdimir Madro is really Ivan's own father, whom the boy mourns as dead!" replied Petrevitch, and this was the actual truth.

Half an hour later Nicholas, the Tartar bravo, was in pursuit of the boy messenger of the czar. The treacherous men who had sent Valdimir Madro to Siberia had plotted well, and no one whom they had not intrusted with the secret knew the truth regarding the unfortunate man's fate.

The Tartar had secured a team of the fastest horses in all St. Petersburg to pursue the boy messenger, and with him in the sledge the spirited animals drew were four desperate fellows whom Nicholas knew he could rely on to execute any lawless deed of violence. Although Ivan had the start of his pursuers, and Peter made the team go at full speed, so that the bells on the duga, or arch over the neck of the middle horse, fairly jingled a chime, still the Tartar gained on him. Ivan had no idea that he was followed. But suddenly, in a lonely part of the way, he discovered under the moonlight that a sledge was coming from the direction of St. Petersburg at full speed.

This was the Tartar's sledge, and as he traveled without bells he was quite near before Ivan discovered his approach. And even then he did not think of danger, and he ordered Peter to give half the road, that the coming sledge might

pass. The Yewschick obeyed, and in a moment the Tartar's sledge was abreast of Ivan's vehicle, and suddenly Nicholas' team was halted, and the four desperadoes in the Tartar's sledge leveled their carbines at Ivan and his driver, while Nicholas called out sternly:

"Halt, or we fire!"

"What means this outrage? Who dares stop the emperor's messenger on the czar's highway?" demanded Ivan.

"It means, Ivan Madro, that we want the secret dispatch you carry, and you shall surrender it or die!" retorted Nicholas fiercely.

CHAPTER IV.—A Contest for the Secret Dispatch.

"See here, you scoundrel," said Ivan, "I know not what motive you may have in seeking to rob a messenger thus, but I do know you are laboring under a misapprehension. I know nothing of a secret dispatch. I am bound for Timsk with verbal instructions for the engineers who are running out the boundary lines of eastern and western Siberia."

"Ha!" exclaimed the Tartar. "You trifle with me! My information is positive, I know beyond the shadow of a doubt that you have a secret dispatch on your person. Gazan, search him."

Very quickly he was searched, and so carefully, too, that the scoundrels were convinced that he did not have the secret dispatch. The sledge was then inspected thoroughly, but no trace of the missive which Count Petrevitch had instructed Nicholas to wrest from Ivan at any cost could be found.

The fact was Ivan had given the message to Peter, and he had been searched and now the bullet had not been found. Ivan was amazed and rejoined beyond measure at this result, for when Nicholas ordered Peter to be searched he thought surely the secret dispatch would be found. The lad could not imagine what Peter could have done with the silver bullet, but he knew that despite his stolid, stupid appearance, the yewschick was really shrewd and cunning.

"You are still determined to believe I have the dispatch, you scoundrel! But I tell you now to your teeth that even were such the truth, all the gold in Russia could not buy it!"

"Ha, ha! We shall see—we shall see, my young gamecock. I fancy you will not crow so loudly soon. Now then, you will come with me," said Nicholas, sneeringly.

Peter was compelled to drive his team in a direction which the Tartar bravo indicated. Two of the fellows under Nicholas and the prime rascal himself rode with Ivan, and the other two members of the Tartar's party followed in their own sledge. For several miles over the snow-clad steppes the captured courier was conducted. But finally among the outlying hills of the great Ural mountain range, the sledges stopped before a castle surrounded by a high wall, built ilke the ancient feudal structure it inclosed, of the stone quarried from the adjacent mountain ledges.

Ivan and Peter were conducted into the old palace. To a small prison-like room with one barred window looking out upon a narrow space

between two wings of the palace Ivan and Peter were conducted, and then they were left alone. Meanwhile Nicholas, as soon as he arrived at the castle, wrote a dispatch which he addressed to Count Petrevitch, St. Petersburg, and sent a mounted peasant with it to the nearest office of the Siberian Telegraph line, some ten versts away. Finding himself alone with Peter, Ivan whispered breathlessly:

"What did you do with the silver bullet?"

"You recollect the hole in my skull where the Tartar's saber struck me when we went on our first messenger journey? Well, the silver bullet is safe in that dent in my head. I slipped it under the plaster that covers the hole, and on account of my bushy hair the rascals did not even find the old wound."

"Excellent! Let the bullet remain where it is," said Ivan.

The hours wore wearily on. But the longest day must have an end, and finally the shadows which were the harbingers of darkness fell more and more gloomily until night dispelled the last struggling ray of light. At last the ancient castle was wrapped in nocturnal quietude. Silence had fallen on the men in the apartment adjoining the room when Ivan and Peter hoped to escape, or they had taken their departure. Then the brave youth and the comrade of his peril set about prying off the lock which secured the door. They worked as silently and stealthily as possible, and at last the door yielded, and they opened it. In the dim light beyond, they saw several recumbent forms. The sleepers did not move. The way of escape seemed open, and Ivan and Peter crept forward, scarcely daring to breathe, while their hearts beat fast, and all their nerves were tense with the excitement of the thrilling moment. But all at once there sounded from without the merry jingle of a chime of sleigh-bells. Voices were heard shouting, and Ivan knew there was an arrival at the castle. The succeeding instant one of the sleeping guards sprang up and seeing Ivan and Peter, he uttered a cry of alarm that brought all his comrades to their feet.

The escaping ones bounded toward a door beyond the guards, but the latter threw themselves upon the devoted pair, and a desperate struggle ensued in the semi-gloom. Ivan and Peter were driven back into the room whence they had come despite all their efforts, and the door they had forced was again secured upon them. Ivan was in despair, and exhausted by the valiant fight he had made, honest Peter had sunk upon the floor when the entrance through which the captives had originally been conducted opened, and a man clad in furs of the most elegant and costly description entered.

The door was closed, and, placing the lamp on a small table, the stranger turned to Ivan and withdrew the mask from his face. Ivan started and uttered an exclamation of surprise as he beheld the haughty features of Count Michael Petrevitch.

"You here, Count Petrevitch?" cried the young messenger.

"As you see. The mask was but a precaution of mine to guard against being recognized by those to whom I wish my presence here to remain a secret," replied the count.

"Why are you here?" demanded Ivan.

"To purchase the secret dispatch," replied the count.

CHAPTER V.—Ivan's Terrible Ordeal.

"Listen to me, Ivan Madro," said Count Petrevitch, breaking the silence. "The secret dispatch which you have cunningly contrived to secrete thus far must be mine. I care not what the cost or what the consequences may be, and I now offer to buy it. Name your price."

"My honor is priceless. Take care, Count Petrevitch, you are guilty of treason to the czar. Do not forget that Alexander is merciless in his punishments," replied Ivan.

"Nonsense, boy. You are in my power. Your life is at my mercy. Every man under this roof regards my authority as his law. Surrender the secret dispatch, and you and your yemshick shall be forth unharmed, and more than that, I pledge you the sacred word of a Russian nobleman that I will save your devoted friend Leo Avondroff."

"You tempt me, Count Petrevitch," muttered the noble boy.

"Think. You owe Leo Avondroff your life, and now you hesitate merely to surrender a scrap of paper containing a tyrant's unjust mandate to save him who sacrificed himself for you from a fate worth than death—the prison mines."

The boy messenger did not immediately reply. A conflict was taking place in his mind. He was engaged in a mental struggle. Friendship and gratitude were contending with his sense of honor and duty to his royal master, whom he had made oath to serve faithfully. It was a trying ordeal. The brave boy's face became pale and drawn. He tried to decide upon his course, and he thought:

"Leo saved my life, and I promised Mira that I would save him. My sister's heart will break if her noble lover goes to the living death of the prison mines. What shall I do?"

But he meant to temporize. He thought to delay the climax which he felt must ensue sooner or later, and so he said:

"Give me an hour to reflect upon your proposition."

"Very well, you shall have that time. Ah, ha, with all your shrewdness, you have now tacitly admitted that you have the dispatch. At the end of one hour I shall return for your answer, and if you are still obdurate you shall be flogged with the knout until you yield the dispatch," said Petrevitch, and thus speaking he withdrew from the prison room.

When the villainous nobleman had retired, Ivan said to Peter:

"I believe that man to be capable of any treachery; I know that he has annoyed and insulted my sister Mira with his pretended admiration, and I suspect he secretly hates Leo."

"I am not very wise, little father, but I'd wager my last copeck that the count has not shown his hand fairly," replied the yemshick.

"No doubt you are right, Peter, but— Ah, someone is coming. Is it the count?" rejoined Ivan.

The succeeding moment the door opened, and Nicholas the Tartar entered.

"Come, yemschick, you two are not to occupy the same quarters. Follow me," said Nicholas, authoritatively.

Peter hesitated, but Ivan signaled him to obey, and the faithful fellow followed the swarthy Tartar out of his young master's presence reluctantly. The door closed behind him, and the boy messenger was left alone with his own unpleasant thoughts. Perhaps half an hour went by, and then Ivan was abruptly aroused from a reverie into which he had fallen by hearing a faint sound at the window which we have mentioned as opening to a passage between two wings of the old castle. Ivan looked toward the window, and his heart gave a joyful bound as he beheld Peter's honest face there.

"I have given the rascals the slip, little father. They locked me in a room, but someone who did not know I was there opened the door again, and I was quick to slip out, I can tell you," said Peter.

"Ah, you are fortunate. If I could only get through the window—What is this? As I live, the woodwork in which the iron bars are secured seems to be somewhat decayed."

Then he began to work at the bar, aided by Peter from the outside. But the bar refused to yield, and Ivan saw that he had not accurately calculated the strength of the wooden frame which sustained it. Meanwhile Peter whispered:

"I overheard a conversation between Count Petrevitch and Nicholas, after the Tartar marched me out of your room, and they meant you and I shall never escape, after they have the secret dispatch. There is a dark plot against the czar of some sort. The count never meant to save Leo. His proposition was all a lie to deceive you, little father."

"The arch traitor!"

"And Nicholas has received orders from the Count to post on to Timsk as soon as they have the secret dispatch. The sledge is at the door now ready for Nicholas' departure," continued Peter.

"Oh, if I were only outside with you, we would try to steal the Tartar's sledge, and make off with the secret dispatch," replied Ivan.

"But that cannot be, since it is impossible to get these bars out. Now, little father, I am a-going back to my prison. I have the dispatch, and if the worst comes, I shall surrender it to save you the torture of the knout."

Scarcely had Peter gone, when the door of Ivan's cell opened, and Count Petrevitch entered again. The nobleman came along as before, and having closed the door, he advanced into the room, scanning the face of the boy messenger eagerly by the light of the lamp.

"Well," said Petrevitch sternly, "I have come for your answer. What is it? Will you surrender the dispatch or not?"

"I have decided to surrender the dispatch," said Ivan.

"Ah, I thought I should bring you to your senses," cried Count Petrevitch, in a voice of intense exultation.

A moment, and Peter entered.

CHAPTER VI.—A Daring Escape.

"Yemschick, your young master has decided to listen to reason. He has agreed to surrender the secret dispatch," said Count Petrevitch, as Peter entered.

An expression of relief came upon the honest yemschick's stolid face, and he lifted his hand half-way to his head—involuntarily reached for the silver bullet. But Peter dropped his hand as the count added:

"Do I not speak truly, Ivan? Have you not promised to deliver the secret dispatch to me here in the presence of your good yemschick?"

"Yes," Ivan enunciated tersely, with his eyes upon Peter's face.

Peter seemed not to comprehend the covert meaning of the singular glance which Ivan bent upon him. We know, too, that Ivan had been granted no opportunity to explain to Peter the nature of the subtle expedient which he had all at once resolved upon. It was not strange, then, all the circumstances considered, that honest Peter, cunning as he was, should suppose that to save himself his young master had really acceded to the count's proposition. And so Peter decided when he heard Ivan answer "Yes," when the count appealed to him for confirmation.

But still the yemschick's mind was not at rest. There was something in Ivan's glance that troubled him, though he did not understand it. The count watched the faces of Ivan and Peter closely, and the young messenger could not, by as much as a nod or a wink, convey the idea to the yemschick that he was deceiving the villain. Of course, nothing was further from Ivan's intentions than that the secret dispatch should be surrendered, and now, through Peter, it seemed that the brave boy's plan was to fall, and that after all the coveted dispatch was to pass into the possession of the treacherous noble.

"Very well, noble sire. Since my master says so you shall have the dispatch," said Peter.

But Count Petrevitch turned his back upon Ivan at that instant so as to directly face Peter, and quick as thought itself Ivan nodded his head negatively in an emphatic manner, and a swift pantomimic signal said plainly as words that he did not mean Peter should give up the dispatch. The yemschick understood at last, and his hand dropped as he was feeling for the silver bullet in his head, and he stared at Ivan, a picture of discomfiture and doubt. The young messenger was now stooping, and before the count could utter a single word he seemed to draw a letter from the lining of his fur-topped knee-boot, and said:

"Here is the secret dispatch. You have won. The czar's message is yours, but remember, it is the price of Leo's life."

Thus speaking, Ivan stepped forward and extended the letter to the count. Count Petrevitch received the letter from Ivan's hand, saying:

"What! It was concealed in your top boot all the time, and my rascals said they would swear it was not on your person. The dolts! the idiots! They did not half search you."

But as the letter left his hand Ivan suddenly snatched a revolver from the count's belt, and

pressed it against the temple of the astonished nobleman as he hissed in an intense whisper:

"One word—a single sound from you and I fire. It is now my life or yours, and as an act of self-defense I shall not hesitate to shoot."

The letter which Ivan had given him fell from the count's hands, but not before he had seen that it was merely an empty envelope.

"Don't shoot!" the count gasped, almost under his breath.

Ivan lowered his pistol, but true to his treacherous nature Petrevitch upon the instant dropped under his arm and made a dive for the door. But as his lips were parted to shout an alarm which would seal the doom of Ivan the brave lad's pistol butt descended upon the back of the count's head, and he fell all in a heap, stunned into complete insensibility.

"Now, then, Peter, there is not a moment—not an instant to lose. Exchange garments with the count as quickly as possible. You are about his size and form. You shall pass for the count and lead me by the guards," said Ivan.

Peter grasped the daring idea, and very quickly the exchange of garments which Ivan suggested was accomplished. Then Ivan dragged the count to a corner of the room out of sight of anyone at the door, and then he said:

"Now we are ready. If we fail now all is over with us. You will lead me past the guards, stalking along in the count's self-important manner, and you will say in his voice that all is arranged and that I go with you."

The next moment the yemschick boldly opened the door and passed through it, followed by Ivan. At the end of the hall at a few feet from the entrance doors of the palace stood Nicholas, the Tartar, and his bravos on guard. But Peter went forward boldly, and as he approached the guards he called out in a voice which was an admirable imitation of the count's:

"Everything is arranged to my satisfaction. The boy will go with me. Remain here with your men until I return, Nicholas."

Nicholas looked surprised, but he muttered:

"Your orders shall be obeyed."

Peter opened the outer door, and the succeeding moment he and Ivan passed out into the night under the glittering stars, and they saw Nicholas' sledge standing before them. Ivan's nerves thrilled. He sprang into the sledge and Peter followed. A peasant held the restive team at the heads, but at a word from the supposed count he released the splendid animals. Peter cracked his whip, and sent the three mettlesome horses forward.

"See, little father. The great gate in the wall of the palace yard, through which we must pass is up. The saints favor us now," said the yemschick.

It was as he stated, and the speeding sledge had almost reached the gate when suddenly there came a chorus of shouts from the palace. The door opened, and Count Petrevitch, followed by Nicholas, the Tartar, dashed out.

"Down with the gate! Stop them! Stop them! A thousand roubles for their capture!" cried the count, furiously.

The gateman sprang to his post, grasped the lever, and began to let down the gate. But Peter strove to urge his team under it before it fell.

The next instant the horses had passed under the gate, but the gate descended upon the dashboard of the sledge and held it fast. Ivan leveled his revolver at the gateman and shouted:

"Up with that gate, or I fire! Quick, on your life, you rascal!"

CHAPTER VII.—At the Posting Station.

The sight of the weapon which Ivan presented at the head of the old gateman who had so suddenly lowered the gate in the great wall inclosing the palace yard, whence the boy messenger was seeking to escape, coupled with the threat uttered by the lad in menacing tones, caused the peasant to shrink back in affright. Ivan turned a shade paler, but with rapidity of action which was ever a characteristic of his in great emergencies like the present, he bounded from the sledge, and reached the lever which controlled the gate. Exerting all his strength, the lad sought to lift the gate and liberate the sledge which the heavy barrier had caught and held against the struggling horses. And now the harsh, commanding voice of Count Petrevitch rang out in a thrilling, deadly threat.

"Drop the gate-lever, you young rascal, or I'll order my man to fire on you!" the treacherous count enunciated.

But as Count Petrevitch spoke the massive gate began to lift, and the yemschick lightened his grasp on the reins mechanically. Up, up, went the gate, and Peter ducked his head, and the succeeding moment the sledge, impelled by the tugging horses, shot under the barrier, and it grazed the yemschick so closely as to brush his cap from his head. And as the sledge glided under the gate Petrevitch, in furious voice, shouted:

"Fire! Dead or alive they must not escape us now!"

The leaden bullets pattered upon the gate, which fell as Ivan let go of the lever, and although he was not struck by the shots, he narrowly escaped a blow from the descending gate. Peter, meanwhile, had exerted all his strength to check the onward course of the frightened horses. The yemschick was a stout, muscular fellow, but the explosion of the firearms had given the horses new fright, and it was not until they had run a short distance that the driver finally succeeded in bringing them to a standstill. Ivan darted after the sledge the instant he was out of the palace yard, and he overtook it almost as soon as it stopped.

"Now away! Drive back to the posting road to Siberia, and we will show those rascals a race such as they never rode before!" cried Ivan as he leaped into the sledge.

Ivan scarcely need give these instructions, and before the words were well out of the young messenger's mouth the horses were speeding away. And on and on, while the wind-storm increased in violence, sped the messenger's sledge. Finally, through the glittering sheen that filled the air, the light of the posting station was discerned like a beacon beaming brilliant through the night, to guard the travelers to the haven which they sought.

The guards, stable boys, and attaches of the

station issued forth as the boy messenger's sledge dashed up, and giving the team in charge of the stable-men, Ivan and Peter entered the main room of the station, and called for food and drink. A supper of black bread, meat, strong tea, and steaming bowls of hot vodki—the vitrollic white brandy of which the Russians are so fond—was soon placed before our travelers, and when they had eaten, the master of the station—a swarthy Cossack officer of gendarmes—entered and demanded their passport, saying:

"Respected ones, I am the master of the station. I would see your papers, as my duty demands."

"Quite right. I am Ivan Madro, an imperial courier, and this is Peter, my yemshick. But you shall see my papers," replied Ivan, and thus speaking, he turned to his heavy fur coat, which he had removed upon entering the house, and thrust his hand into the inside pocket of the garment as it hung from a hook on the wall.

"I have been robbed! My papers are gone!" he exclaimed.

"Do you mean to tell me that you have lost your passport and papers here?"

"Yes, I am sure they were in my pocket when I hung my fur coat up by the fire," replied Ivan, while a great dread lest this new calamity should bring dire misfortune came upon him.

"Impossible! There is no thief here, and only the servants of the hostelry have entered this room since you came in, and they are here now. Do not stir, my lads. Tell me, have you seen anything of the traveler's papers?" said the officer, addressing his last words to a couple of young peasants who served as waiters at the inn.

The two men were prompt and positive in asserting their entire innocence of all knowledge of the missing papers. Ivan was perplexed and mystified. The waiters looked stolid and not likely to undertake a daring robbery. But thinking that appearances might, in this instance, prove deceptive, Ivan said desperately:

"Let those fellows be searched."

"It shall be done," assented the officer, and he called in a couple of the station guards.

But nothing was found on the two men whom Ivan suspected, and then the station-master said:

"I think you are playing a shrewd game. Clearly the man you call your yemshick is in disguise. Never did a poor driver own such costly robes. Why, they are fit for a wealthy nobleman! No, no, young man, I shall have to detain you until I am satisfied you should be allowed to proceed."

"But I tell you I am a courier of the czar!" cried Ivan, warmly.

"I care not. All your protests will not avail. My orders are to take the most stringent precautions in dealing with travelers. Without a passport you cannot go further," replied the Cossack sternly.

The next moment the door opened, and Nicholas the Tartar entered, followed by his swarthy braves.

"Ah, ha! I've run you down at last, you Nihilist scoundrels!" cried Nicholas, as he saw Ivan and Peter.

Then he added to the Cossack officer:

"These two men are Nihilists. They have the forged papers of an imperial courier with them,

but I have here an order for their arrest signed by Count Petrevitch of the third section of the police."

Nicholas presented a document as he spoke. The officer saw it was a regular warrant of arrest, and he saw and identified the signature of his old patron. The young messenger and Peter saw that there was no escape. They thought that at last the time had arrived when they must submit to the inevitable. With difficulty Ivan refrained from surrendering himself to his emotions for a moment, and he crossed to Peter's side and whispered:

"Promise me, promise me on your soul, Peter, old friend, you will not give up the secret dispatch. Why, it may be the life of some innocent man depends upon it."

Peter bowed a silent assent, while his firm eyes told the unwavering allegiance he would maintain. And so, as Nicholas now strode toward Ivan, the heroic youth leaped backward against the wall and leveled his pistol. Instantly Peter ranged himself beside his young master, his homely face all alight with resolution and devotion. Shoulder to shoulder stood the comrades, and they faced the foe unflinchingly. Peter was armed as well as the young messenger, and he imitated the example of the latter in presenting his pistol at the Tartars. There was a menacing gleam in Nicholas' small, evil eyes as he said sibilantly:

"Drop your weapons! Surrender or——"

A significant gesture with his hand across his throat filled the hiatus with an emphasis more terrible than words could have conveyed.

"And your doom be upon your own heads," interpolated the station master.

The young messenger understood that the next few moments were likely to be the most thrilling periods of his life—that the crisis was to end his career forever it might be, and yet he maintained his composure wonderfully. And at this moment of suspense, while Ivan and Peter awaited the attack of Count Petrevitch's hirelings, there was the sound of another arrival at the station, and almost at once the door opened, and two travelers entered, bringing with them a gust of wind and snow, that for the nonce prevented Ivan's seeing them distinctly. But as the door closed again, the face of the foremost one of the new arrivals enthralled Ivan's gaze. His eyes protruded, his face turned pale as death, and a gasping cry escaped his parted lips.

But noting that this personage was in disguise, though a single glance had enabled him to penetrate the same, Ivan comprehended that after all it might be he was not deceived. And the startling denouement that ensued corroborated this opinion.

CHAPTER VIII.—The March of the Exiles.

Leaving Ivan and Peter for the time, we must follow the fortunes of Leo Avondroff, the heroic young patriot and the lover of Ivan's sister, Mira, in order to make plain certain events which presently ensued in the exciting life drama at the posting station of which Ivan was the central figure. On the morning of the day following the departure of the boy messenger from

St. Petersburg Leo was led out of his cell into the parade ground of the grim old fortress of Peter and Paul. Leo shuddered as he thought of the terrible journey before him. He knew that hundreds had died on the way over the snow-clad steppes, and that there was suffering and privation of every sort in store for him.

Presently, amid the groans and shrieks of human misery and despair, the gates of the fortress opened, and the head of the convoy moved through them. The torches of the Cossack guards flitted hither and thither, and the exiles began their march through the silent streets of the city in the faint grayish light of coming dawn. A six weeks' journey to Tobolsk lay before the unfortunates. Tobolsk is an important city of Siberia, situated at the junction of the Tobol and Irtysh rivers, and it is the great halting place for the convoys bound for the prison mines. Here the exiles are distributed to their various destinations. The full light of day found the convoy of exiles beyond the confines of the Russian capital which few would ever see again.

Along the snowy road Leo was compelled to march with his comrades in misery. The icy wind penetrated to his bones, but he set his teeth and fought against the feeling of despair which surged upon him. And now he saw, with dread that was new, that the Cossack officer in command of the guards was a personal friend and tool of Count Petrevitch. Knowing, as he did, that the treacherous count hated him as a successful rival for the love of Mira, the presence of Petrevitch's tool could but cause Leo gloomy forebodings. But all at once he saw a face among the guards the sight of which gave him a sudden gleam of hope. He recognized one of the Cossacks. The man belonged to the secret order of Nihilists, whose members are to be found everywhere throughout Russia, and who are bound by the most solemn vows to assist and protect each other.

Leo knew that the Cossack whom he recognized was attached to the city guards, and at once he suspected that his friends had managed to have Sasi—such was the Cossack's name—sent with the convoy.

The march of the exiles was continued until the night of Ivan's escape from the palace to which Nicholas had taken him fell. Then the convoy went into camp a few versts from the old palace. The wind-storm had begun, when, under cover of the blinding sheets of snow, Sasi, the Cossack, crept to Leo's side.

"Brother, I am sent by the league to favor your escape. I have charge of this side of the camp. Under the darkness and the snow you must glide away. Go on for two versts along the road, then you will come to a deserted hut. Await me there, and I will bring you a swift horse and a passport. Then you can fly for the frontier."

Thus said Sasi, and then he disappeared. Leo crept away. Soon he was clear of the camp, and he sped on until he saw a hut half covered by the drifting snow. Leo entered the shelter. He sank down upon the floor exhausted, and a few moments elapsed. Then the fugitive heard a sound, and the door opened. A Cossack covered with snow entered. Leo thought it was his friend, and he arose to meet him, when suddenly the Cossack dealt him a blow with his clubbed

carbine, and he fell senseless. Quickly then he was bound and gagged. The Cossack who had surprised Leo had overheard Sasi's plot. He was an ambitious rascal, and anxious for promotion, and he thought it would be a great thing to foil the exile's escape single-handed. So he kept his discovery to himself and followed Leo alone. The young exile returned to consciousness, and found the rascal by this side.

"Ah, ha!" he gritted, exultantly. "Now I'll wait until Sasi comes, and I'll strike him down as he enters. You are powerless to warn him. I'll march you both back to camp, and I think I should be made a captain at least for the job."

Leo groaned, and he was in agony on his friend's account, for he knew he could not save him. In a moment or so footsteps were heard. The Cossack placed himself beside the door with his carbine clubbed to strike. The door swung open, and the Cossack's carbine descended upon the head of a man who crossed the threshold. He fell heavily, and lighting a lantern which he had with him, Leo's captor bent over the fallen man. Then a howl of fury escaped his lips. The man he had struck down was not Sasi, but he was the captain of the convoy. The gale had now become a tempest, and the log hut shook to its foundation.

As the Cossack reeled back in consternation from beside his victim Sasi bounded into the hut. A sweeping blow from his lance felled the wretch who meant to foil Leo's escape, and he was liberated in a moment. Then he and Sasi fled from the hut. A horse stood secured to an adjacent tree.

"Mount and away! Here is a bundle of clothing and your papers—a passport. When at a safe distance, discard your convict's clothing and put on the suit in the bundle. With it you will find a wig and beard, for you need a facial disguise."

"God bless you for this night's work, brother!" said Leo fervently, and their hands met in the secret grip of the Nihilists. The succeeding moment Leo mounted his horse and dashed away.

In the midst of a snowy forest he halted and assumed the clothing and the wig and beard Sasi had given him. Then on he went again. But in the storm he lost his way and wandered to the road to Siberia again. Presently he heard a groan, and he came upon a horse which had fallen in a gully so as to pin his rider to the ground. Motives of humanity impelled Leo, and he managed to get the fallen horse to his feet. Fortunately his rider had sustained no injury of a serious character, and the animal had also escaped broken bones and was able to proceed.

But the rider who had fallen under his horse had lain in the snow so long that he was chilled to the heart, and he could scarcely keep his seat on his horse after Leo assisted him to mount. The poor fellow implored Leo to accompany him, lest he should fall by the way if left alone and perish.

Leo could not refuse the traveler's request, and so he journeyed on with him. They saw the lights of the station ahead, and as he had fled from the exiles' camp before evening rations were served, and he was well-nigh famished, Leo resolved to go with his comrade to the station. He felt confident that no one at the station would

recognize him, and that the passport given him by Sasi would serve to satisfy the station-master.

And thus it came about that the two men who entered the posting station just as a desperate, hopeless combat between Ivan and his enemies seemed about to commence, were Leo Avondroff and the traveler he had saved. A moment's silence succeeded the entree of Leo and the stranger.

CHAPTER IX.—A Friend In Need.

Until Leo entered the posting station where Ivan and his yemshchik were confronted by Count Petrevitch's desperado emissaries the young patriot had not seen the face of the man he had rescued in the terrible storm. Now, however, under the brilliant light which illuminated the station, Leo obtained a distinct view of his unknown comrade. The latter was a handsome young man attired in the richest and most costly costume of the period, and as he flung open his heavy fur coat, and drew near the fire that blazed cheerfully in a wide fireplace, Leo saw upon his velvet doublet the imperial cross of the legion of honor.

At once glance, too, Leo had comprehended the meaning of the scene in the posting station. He understood that his beloved Ivan was in trouble, though he was much surprised at seeing him there, as he was not yet informed as to any of the adventures which had befallen the young messenger since they were both cast into prison in St. Petersburg.

"Come," said Nicholas, the Tartar, after a moment, as he flourished the order of arrest signed by Count Petrevitch, "once more, Ivan Madro, I call upon you to obey the order of Count Petrevitch, which I hold in my hand, and surrender."

"Never!" replied Ivan.

His voice rang with determination, and Leo thought, swiftly:

"I must save him, but how? Ah, the young man I rescued is evidently a nobleman, high in favor of the czar, since he wears the imperial cross. He owes me a debt of gratitude, and he has a noble face."

"I would advise you to surrender peacefully," said the master of the posting station.

While he was speaking Leo had drawn close to the young man he had saved, and in his ear he breathed the thrilling whisper:

"The young man who is threatened with arrest is a courier of the czar. I recognize him positively as Ivan Madro, and I implore you to save him if you are grateful for the service I have this night rendered you."

"I think I can prevent his arrest," whispered the nobleman.

Nicholas' patience was now exhausted, and turning to his men he said, sternly:

"Forward, men! One combined rush and the Nihilists will be overpowered!"

But as the Tartar issued his order the tall, commanding figure arose between him and Ivan, and the young nobleman stood erect with the ruddy fire-light falling upon him, and the imperial cross on his breast flashed in the glow.

"Hold!" he said, commandingly. "I am the Count Paul Playoni! I demand to see your warrant of arrest."

Nicholas had observed the cross on the young nobleman's breast, and he said more deferentially, as he presented the warrant:

"Here is the document, respected sir. You will find it all in legal form, I assure you."

"We shall see," rejoined the young nobleman, as he received the paper. At a glance he acquainted himself with its contents, and a smile of satisfaction crossed his fine features as he read. Then, turning to Ivan, he said:

"You are Ivan Madro and a courier of the czar I well know. Now, tell me, on your oath, are you or are you not now carrying a message for the czar?"

"I am. The czar himself gave me an important dispatch, and commanded me to post with it to Timsk," replied Ivan.

"Enough. I think, my man, that you are ignorant of the law. And you, too, sir, officer of the station. The warrant is signed only by Count Petrevitch, and therefore in this case it is worthless."

"Why so?" asked the latter with a look of alarm.

"It is all very simple. But yesterday the czar issued a special order to the civil authorities of all the Russian empire stating that imperial couriers, while in the discharge of duty, should be exempt from arrest, save in case warrant was issued by Alexander himself. Here is the order."

Thus speaking, the young nobleman drew forth a document stamped with the imperial eagle, and handed it to the station master, who read it, and then said humbly as he bowed low:

"It is indeed so. Pardon me, noble sir, I was ignorant of the law, and the young messenger had lost his papers. But now, since you recognize him, he shall not be molested further."

"That is well. Now, sir Tartar, you had best take yourself off with your black-muzzled followers. I do not like your looks, and if you delay your departure I shall be tempted to order the gendarmes to place you under arrest for attempting to violate an imperial ordinance," said the noble Count Paul, and Nicholas and his evil-looking followers stalked out of the station; but as he went, the Tartar flashed back upon Ivan a look of menace and fury.

A moment of silence, and then the jingle of bells receding from the station told that Count Petrevitch's hirelings were retracing their way through the storm. Ivan thought they were going to report their failure to their master and such was the truth. Count Petrevitch was awaiting their return at the castle whence Ivan had escaped, and in due time Nicholas and his party arrived, and made known their failure to the treacherous noble.

"Misfortune upon Count Paul for his meddling! The boy messenger seems destined to foil us at every step. But the man I sent into exile shall never return to betray our great conspiracy," muttered Petrevitch.

Then he reflected for a time intently, and finally drew from his pocket a document which he had prepared in St. Petersburg in view of possible contingencies. The paper in question was stamped with the imperial eagle and signed with the name of the czar, but it was a clever forgery. In truth, the document purported to

be an imperial order for the execution of Vladimir Madro, Ivan's father, at the prison mines of Timsk, and it commanded that the governor carry out the decree of death upon the exile immediately upon the reception of the warrant. Calling Nicholas to his side, the count read the forged document to him, and then placing it in the Tartar's hand, he said, impressively:

"Take this order and make a short cut across country, so as to get ahead of the boy messenger on the road to Timsk. Then keep ahead of him. Use every means to reach Timsk in advance of Ivan Madro, and see that the governor executes Vladimir Madro before the boy comes with the secret dispatch."

Nicholas concealed the forged order, and, with a salute, he strode away, and half an hour later he was posting away across country on horseback in company with two of his most desperate men.

Meanwhile the station-master had withdrawn from the public room of the posting-house, and Ivan and his friends were left alone. The young messenger hastened to thank Count Paul for his timely interference, and then Ivan and Leo retired to a private apartment and everything that had transpired since they parted was explained between them. The loss of Ivan's papers still remained a mystery, however.

CHAPTER X.—The Escaped Exile's Message.

The scene now changes to St. Petersburg, to which city Count Petrevitch returned after Nicholas departed from the isolated castle. Two days had elapsed since the departure of the convoy of exiles of which Leo had been a member, and at a late hour of night a band of more than a score of men were assembled within an underground apartment in an obscure part of the city. A chapter of the great order of Russian patriots who are called Nihilists were holding one of their secret meetings, and presently the guard at the door admitted a new arrival, at whose appearance a glad murmur ran through the assemblage, and every "brother" of the order pressed forward eagerly to grasp his hand and speak words of congratulation and warm welcome.

The stranger was one Surgius, an exile who had escaped from the prison mines of Timsk, Siberia, and he had that very day arrived in the Russian capital, cleverly disguised. The meeting of the order had been called to do honor to the escaped man who had suffered for the cause of freedom which was so dear to the hearts of all present. Surgius stated to the chief of the order that he must leave them at once, saying:

"Brother, I must go now, for I have a sacred mission and a trust to execute, and my word has been given to a brother in the mines that, if in my power, I would not allow twenty-four hours to pass over my head after I arrived in St. Petersburg before I made good my promise."

Then Surgius gave the salute of the secret league and strode forth from the apartment. The snow was falling fast, but drawing his long cloak close about his throat, the escaped exile threaded the deserted street swiftly, and at length he paused at the door of Mira Madro's humble home where she dwelt alone with an

aged aunt, in the absence of her brother Ivan. Upon the door Surgius rapped, and in a moment Mira's voice came to his hearing as she asked:

"Who is there?"

"I am Surgius, the friend of your father."

Then the door opened, and was quickly closed and secured again when the exile had entered. Mira was alone, and she grasped both the exile's extended hands and gave him an earnest welcome, for she knew that in years gone by he had been her father's trusted friend.

"My child, have you ever thought that a mistake might have been made and that the body which was found in the river and identified as the remains of your father was not he?"

"No, no! It cannot be."

"Yes, yes. It is true, I bring you joy. The news you must bear. Be brave, Mira. Be brave, my child. Your father lives."

"He lives! Oh, father! father!"

"Yes," the exile went on, "your father lives. He was secretly hurried away to Siberia, through the machinations of traitors to the czar, who feared him. I left your father alive and well in the prison mines of Timsk, and I promised him if I escaped I would find you and tell you he yet lived."

"And you have nobly kept your promise. Oh, what joy! What great happiness you have brought me!"

Surgius pressed Mira's hand warmly, and then he left the house to which he had brought so much joy and sped away through the night. And Mira knew no sleep that night. When day dawned she made her way to the czar's palace, and at the gate she besought the guards to admit her. But the rude soldiers ordered her away, and Mira sat down and wept. The hours passed, and the sun was high when the czar, walking in the garden, paused near the gate as he heard the sounds of heartbroken sobs from without. Alexander looked through the paling, and saw the exile's beautiful daughter. A lovely picture Mira formed.

"And they will not let me see the czar! Oh, the cruel men! I am sure the good emperor would listen to my plea if he only knew the truth," wailed Mira, and the czar heard her.

"I am Alexander of Russia. What would you ask of the czar, child?" said the emperor.

Then Mira lifted her beautiful face, and in simple, touching language told the story of her father's unjust banishment to Siberia, and implored his pardon. When Mira mentioned her father's name—Vladimir Madro—the czar started and said to himself, quickly:

"As I live, there is truth in all the girl says, for her father is exile No. 105—the man who can reveal the names of the secret cabal of nobles."

Then in a few words he told Mira that he had sent Ivan to Timsk to order her father's return to St. Petersburg, and he added:

"When Vladimir Madro is here, I shall not only pardon but reward him. There is a secret of the State which I may not intrust to you involved in all this, but be happy in my assurance."

And then he walked away, and Mira returned to her home, thinking herself the happiest mortal in all Russia. But alarming news awaited

her. A young man who had been in the service of her father at one time, and who was under great obligations to him, but who was now one of Count Petrevitch's house servants, and secretly in sympathy with the Nihilists, met Mira at the door. He drew her inside, and quickly whispered:

"Mira, I have come to tell you that your brother's life is in peril."

CHAPTER XI.—Mira's Heroism.

"What do you mean, Narki?" asked Mira quickly.

Then, speaking in low tones, but very rapidly, the count's servant went on to explain that he had overheard the count say that Ivan had been sent by the czar to Siberia, with a secret dispatch, which it was, to the count, of the most vital importance should never reach its destination. And further, that the count had sent Nicholas the Tartar to doom Ivan and rob him of the secret dispatch on the way to Siberia. Mira was almost frozen with terror when she understood Ivan's danger.

"Petrevitch is a monster, and yet I have pledged myself to become his wife! Oh, misery! but stay! By his own act the count has revoked my pledge. He only saved Ivan for the time. Now he plots my brother's death, and so he frees me from my terrible promise."

Thus thought Mira. But she felt that Ivan must be warned. All at once she sprang to her feet, her eyes flashed, and she looked like the heroine she was.

"I will follow my brother to Siberia. God helping us, together we will save my father and defeat his enemies!" she said.

Mira flew to an old bookcase and took from it a heavy purse of gold—all her brother Ivan's savings. Then she said to Narki, who seemed dazed by her excitement:

"Here, good friend, take this gold and bring me a good team of horses and a posting-sledge; also hire a trusty yemshick."

Narki took the money, and Mira fairly pushed him out of the door. Then she thought:

"I will need a passport."

Securing it, Mira hastened away with the precious document in her bosom. Reaching home she found Narki at the door with a good team and a posting sledge. A yemshick held the reins, and Narki assured Mira that his name was Michael, and that he was a most trusty fellow. Mira's aunt was absent, and after making the necessary preparations for a long journey the brave young girl left the house and entered the waiting sledge and was soon on her journey.

Meanwhile Ivan and Leo held a long consultation at the posting station, and Peter took part in it.

"As soon as the news of your escape is known, every guard in Russia will be on the lookout for you, Leo, and if you attempt to reach the frontier now you will be captured, I fear," said Ivan finally.

"Then what would you advise me to do?" asked Leo.

"Come with me to Siberia. They will never think of looking for you on the road to the prison mine. In the meantime, while we are making our journey, the excitement over your disappearance will have subsided, and once we reach Timsk you can slip away and make the Chinese frontier."

"Yes, I like your plan, Ivan. It shall be as you advise. I will go with you," assented Leo.

Half an hour later the czar's messenger and his comrades resumed their journey. Meanwhile, when morning dawned the escape of Leo was discovered, and also the absence of the two men who were buried under the fallen hut. Search was made, and the dead bodies of the two Cossacks were found. But the snow had obliterated Leo's tracks, and his hunters could not trail him. At the first telegraph station the convoy reached the news of Leo's escape was sent all over Russia and Siberia. Ivan and his comrades posted steadily on until the Ural Mountains, the great rugged belt separating Russia proper from Siberia, was left far behind them, and they began to traverse the borders of the snow-clad, wind-swept Kirgez steppes.

But they were doomed to never reach their destination in such a short time. As they reached the steppes they were set upon by Zingari robbers and our three friends were captured and taken into the robbers' stronghold.

The same day that witnessed the capture of Ivan and his companions Nicholas, the emissary of Petrevitch, met an accident with the running away of his team and the throwing of the emissary from the sleigh, thereby sustaining injuries which left him at the posting station for three days.

On continuing his journey he came to a place where an accident had happened to a party of travelers. All that were left of the party were two skeletons of men, which was all that was left after the wolves and other animals had picked their bones. In the pocket of a fur coat belonging to one of the skeletons was the passport of Ivan Madro, the boy messenger of Siberia.

"Yes," said Nicholas the Tartar, "here are the remains of Ivan Madro and his yemshick."

Nicholas and his men returned to the station, and the first person his eyes rested upon was Mira. Then he told the girl of the death of her brother. Mira then called upon the master of the station to arrest Nicholas and his men, search them and find the czar's secret dispatch, which she concluded they had taken from Ivan's body.

CHAPTER XII.—Count Petrevitch and Mira Face to Face.

In response to Mira's request that the Tartar be searched, the master of the station was about to accord an assent, when there were sounds without which indicated that there was still another arrival at the station. A premonitory chill, that to her mind presaged coming evil, trembled through Mira's form. But almost instantly the door opened, and Count Petrevitch himself stood revealed. And now it was Mira's turn to experience the utmost surprise and consternation. She had never suspected that Count Petrevitch had pursued her; but such had been his course.

"What means this scene?" demanded Petrevitch.

Before the station master could reply, Nicholas in a few words explained everything. The station master then added:

"It is all as the Tartar says."

"Very well. I vouch for him. He is a trusted emissary of the secret police, and now as to this girl, I know her. She is a Nihilist spy. Her reason is a trifle shattered, it is said, but she is none the less dangerous. Let the gendarmes remove her to an interior apartment, and there guard her closely," said Petrevitch.

"Monster! You have doomed my father and my brother, and now you would add me to the list of your victims!" shrieked Mira.

But the count made no reply, and two stalwart gendarmes summoned by the station master entered and dragged Mira away to another room of the station. Then Petrevitch ordered that he be left alone with Nicholas and his men, and when he found himself thus he said:

"Is Ivan Madro really dead?"

"Yes, sir," replied Nicholas.

"And have you secured the secret dispatch?"

"No."

"A thousand furies!"

"It was no fault of mine, count. I think the wolves must have destroyed the dispatch."

"I trust so. At all events, as it is lost we have nothing to fear from it."

"No, sir."

"And now hear my plan. Either Mira Madro becomes my bride, here at this station, and as such returns with me to St. Petersburg, or she goes on with you doomed to exile for life at Timsk. You will post on in the morning and see that Vladimir Madro, Ivan's father, is executed as soon as you arrive at the mines."

Petrevitch stalked away as he thus spoke, and in a moment he stood in Mira's presence.

"You are foiled. Someone has traduced me and sent you here on a fool's errand. But be that as it may, I now claim the fulfillment of your promise to become my wife. Girl, you are in my power. No earthly help can come to you. I will not bandy words. The time for that has passed. I am bent upon coercion. Either you become my bride this night, or I will send you on to the prison mines under escort of Nicholas and his comrades!" hissed Petrevitch.

"I choose the mines! Now go, you monster. The good God may answer my prayers yet, for I have faith to believe He will not allow you to consummate the crime you meditate even yet."

"Your fate be on your own head," hissed Petrevitch, and he passed through the door, and Mira was left alone in her despair and dread. She sank upon her knees, and buried her face in her hands.

And while Mira knelt thus the brother whom she believed to be dead was making a thrilling escape from the Zingari robbers.

He and his comrades were taken to the camp of the band, and there kept until this night. Then the Zingaris were exultant over the successful robbery of a party of traders, and having drunk deeply, they were more or less intoxicated, and Ivan and Peter consulted with Leo and resolved to attempt to escape. They were all in one hut, and one by one they succeeded in eluding

the guards and crept away. They had agreed to meet at the rude stable, at some distance, where the band kept their own horses and those they had taken from Ivan. But a severe snowstorm was raging, and Ivan missed his way to the stable. He wandered for some time, but finally found the stable. Then he experienced a great disappointment, for Leo and Peter were not there. The posting sledge in which Ivan had been captured was in the stable, and also his team. Ivan set about harnessing the horses to the sledge, and he soon had them all ready for a start.

Still Peter and Leo did not come. Presently, moreover, Ivan heard shouts and yells which informed him his foes had discovered the absence of their prisoners. He could delay no longer, and he leaped into the sledge and urged the team out of the stable. As he did so a gluttural voice called out:

"Halt!"

Ivan saw two of the robbers of the steppes at his horses' heads.

CHAPTER XIII.—A Nihilist "Brother."

The boy messenger was armed. Before leaving the hut whence he had escaped he had secured a carbine and a pair of pistols belonging to one of the half-intoxicated guards. As Ivan beheld the two robbers at his horses' heads he quickly drew one of his pistols, and, well knowing that were his flight retarded an instant longer the entire Zingari band would appear to cut off his escape, he discharged his weapon. One of the Zingaris fell. It was an act of self-defense, and Ivan felt that he was entirely justifiable. As his comrade went down the remaining Zingari sprang away through the blinding snow, and Ivan whipped up his horses and sent them dashing along the forest way, shaping his course for the posting-road across the czar's frozen prison-land.

Ivan drove steadily onward, but in the haste of his flight he had not been able to secure his reindeer coat, or *dakha*, a garment which, though very light, is almost impervious to cold. The temperature began to fall as the snow ceased to descend, and Ivan began to suffer from the cold. Suddenly a sound broke upon his hearing, and he was partially aroused. The succeeding moment a native sledge of the rude Siberian style drove up beside him. Then he recognized one of the men at his side as a waiter at the posting station where he had been robbed of his passport. One of them entered the youth's sledge and drove for him. The other followed in his own sledge, and so the next station was finally reached.

There Ivan fully recovered from the dread cold, and the waiter whom he had recognized was left alone with him. Presently he and Ivan engaged in a conversation, and all at once Ivan was startled to see the waiter make the secret sign of the order of liberty, or chapter of the Nihilists to which the boy messenger belonged. Then Ivan knew he was a "brother," and he knew he was, as such, to be fully trusted. He answered the sign.

"I have an explanation to make," said the man, in a low, earnest tone. "I stole your passport at the station."

"You! Ah, and what was your object?"

"I did the deed to save a brother Nihilist. He was hiding in the forest near the station with a comrade. They had a sledge, but they needed your passport. I gave it to them, and they posted on, on the route to China. But they met a terrible fate. They drove over a ledge in the night, and the wolves set upon them and devoured them. Their bodies were found, and your papers were discovered with them. It was found by one Nicholas, a Tartar spy of the secret police. He thinks you perished, and he has not been undeceived, and has reported your death. The Tartar is now at the last station."

"Well, now the Tartar will not seek to make a race with me longer. He shall not be informed of my escape if I can prevent it," Ivan thought. Aloud he said:

"The Tartar is a villain and my enemy. I would not have him know I have survived."

"He need not know it. Only a guard or so, both of whom are Nihilists, know of your late arrival here. We will bind them to secrecy, and you can post on, if you are able, before the post-master and his officers, who have long since retired, awaken."

"I will go at once. Have fresh horses brought to the door. But first, in the name of our brotherhood, I claim your assistance to find two friends of mine," replied Ivan.

Then he continued and told the man of his recent adventures, and the other solemnly promised that he would inform the station master of the fate of Leo and Peter, and have a thorough search made for them, and also see that if found they were told to pursue Ivan. A little later Ivan was again en route, and the Nihilist kept his word. A search was instituted for Leo and Peter by the gendarmes, and they found the camp of the Zingaris, but the robbers of the steppes had deserted it, and no trace of Leo or Peter was found.

CHAPTER XIV.—Brother and Sister.

When in the neighborhood of the next station, after leaving the Nihilist, who had explained the secret of the missing passport, Ivan, instead of proceeding directly to the station-house, went to the humble abode of a woodsman whom he knew as a Nihilist. There Ivan remained the ensuing day, and the following morning he sent his host, who though a very stupid-looking fellow was really cunning and intelligent, to the station to learn if Leo and Peter had arrived there. Returning the peasant reported that information had been received at the station that the camp of the Zingaris, whence Ivan had escaped, had been discovered by the gendarmes of the station, where the lad had made the acquaintance of the brother of his order. But it was further said that two travelers who were reported missing had not been found.

The boy messenger was very much disappointed at the reception of this news. But he did not yet abandon the hope which he had all along

entertained that Leo and Peter might yet rejoin him. After considering all the circumstances, and reflecting as to probable contingencies, Ivan concluded to wait one day longer for Leo and his faithful yemshick.

Meanwhile during the time of Ivan's stay at the hut of the woodsman, Nicholas the Tartar and his men had resumed their journey toward Timsk, taking Mira with them according to the order of Count Petrevitch. When the Tartar parted with his master the latter said to him in a voice which reached Mira's ears:

"I shall soon follow you. Remember, I hold you responsible for the girl. On your life see that no harm comes to her, and that she does not escape."

The Tartar and his party passed the station near which Ivan was in hiding, and he was ignorant of the fact. Once more Nicholas was ahead of the boy messenger, whom he supposed to have become food for the wolves. When the time which Ivan had decided he would pass at the woodsman's had gone by, and no tidings of Leo or Peter were received at the station, the young courier again resumed his journey. At a station further on he sent the message by telegraph which he had decided upon, although he was informed that it was doubtful if the line was open to the Urals. Then, as Ivan continued his lonely journey, he little thought that the dear sister of whom he thought constantly was bound for the same destination as himself.

Great indeed would have been Ivan's indignation and alarm regarding Mira had he received an intimation of the truth. Arriving at Timsk, Ivan rested for one day and looked about the city, but he did not find amusement or forgetfulness there. Anxiety for Leo and Peter and solicitude for the future made the lad restless and distraught. He posted on toward Timsk, impelled by a feverish impatience to reach the end of his journey. In the light of future events it seemed to the lad that a mysterious premonition of the immediate necessity for his presence at the prison mines must have taken possession of his mind and impelled him to speed. The great journey from Timsk to the Baikal region was made, and Ivan at last found himself safely in the vicinity of the mines.

Near the close of a bright winter's day Ivan drove into the town of Timsk and went to the house of an old friend who was a native of the Baikal country, and who had established a trading store for the convenience of the rude mountaineers of the surrounding country. Ivan was determined to reveal himself to the governor that very night, and after partaking of needed refreshments at the abode of his friend he set out for the residence of the governor, Colonel Amiskoff.

Meanwhile Nicholas, the Tartar, with Mira and his followers, had arrived at Timsk the day before. Mira had been placed in one of the little log cottages where exiles who were not to labor in the mines were allowed to live. The poor girl had secured the companionship of an old Siberian woman, who for a small recompense was content to serve the girl exile as a domestic. Mira was alone in her little cottage on the night of Ivan's arrival. The fire in the poor little room burned

cheerfully, and its light illuminated the apartment.

The lonely girl had been seated, but she went to the fire, and stood there with clasped hands gazing into its slumberous depths. She had lifted her hands and clasped them over her head with a gesture of utter weariness and despair. Her form made a picture which anyone passing the window, where the curtain had not yet been drawn, could see. And Ivan's way led him by Mira's cottage. He saw the glow of the firelight in the window, and the next glance revealed the girl before the hearth.

Then Ivan halted as though he had received a shock. His heart gave a great bound, and then seemed to stand still for a moment. Could it be? Was it Mira whom he saw? His mind could scarcely grasp the idea that all was true. He half fancied he was the victim of some weird hallucination. But no. Mira turned and her face was revealed clearly in the firelight. Ivan reeled to the door, opened it, and staggered across the threshold.

CHAPTER XV.—At the Prison Mines.

The next instant the brother and sister were clasped in each other's arms. Mira then proceeded to narrate to her brother all that she had learned since he left St. Petersburg, and when she came to tell of the discovery of the great truth that her father lived, Ivan's joy and amazement was so complete that for a time he was dumb and motionless. Then he fell upon his knees, and while Mira knelt at his side the two offered up a prayer of thanksgiving that must have touched the heart of anyone who could have heard it.

"And so the secret dispatch was to save my father!" exclaimed Ivan. "And now it is lost."

"And Nicholas is here with the order for our father's execution."

"Mira, this awful crime must not take place."

"How can we save our father?"

"I cannot tell yet. Let me think. Ah, what was that?"

"The shouts of a party of gendarmes. They come this way," said Mira, going to the window and looking out.

Ivan came to her side.

"It is so. And they have a prisoner in their midst."

The gendarmes came on, and presently Mira and Ivan saw the face of their captive.

"Leo!" gasped Mira, and the over-excited girl sank back and fell a dead weight in her brother's arms.

It was Leo whom the gendarmes had captured. The news of his escape had been telegraphed all over Siberia. That very day the mountain patrol had captured him as he was proceeding on the trail through the Baikal which led to China. The gendarmes passed on with Leo, and Ivan revived Mira.

"It was Leo!" gasped Mira, as soon as she could again speak.

"Yes. Poor fellow, he has been recaptured."

Then Ivan told his sister of Leo's escape from the convoy of exiles, and he also explained everything that had happened to himself since he left St. Petersburg.

"Do you know that our father yet lives, and that he is in the mines?"

"I have learned that he was taken ill in the mines and that he was sent to the hospital, where he has sufficiently recovered to be employed as a nurse."

Mira told her brother then that the hospital was a rude building near the mines. He embraced her, bade her have hope, and then leaving the cottage he made his way in the direction which Mira had indicated. Ivan reached the long, low log structure which served as a hospital for the slaves of the mines. A guard stood at the door. Ivan scanned his face closely, and then made the secret sign of the Nihilists. The guard returned it, and without a single word he stepped aside and allowed the devoted youth to pass in.

"I am looking for a friend from the mines. I have a permit, or I could not have entered. Where is Vladimir Madro?"

"Ycnder. Go through the small door and you will find him," replied the man addressed, and he pointed.

Ivan passed through the door indicated, and he saw a room filled with cots. A man met him at the door. He was the boy messenger's father. The exile stifled the cry that had arisen to his lips, as he beheld his son.

"I have come to save you," said Ivan, and in a hurried whisper he told his father all in a very few words.

As Ivan concluded Leo appeared in the door through which the boy messenger had drawn his father. He explained that he had received a wound at the hands of his captors, and was so sent to the hospital where Ivan's father had recognized him.

"It is a question of your father's life. I am not in danger of death. Now we have thought of a ruse to foil Count Petrevitch and the Tartar. Your father is to be sent back to the mines to-night. Now we mean to change places. I will assume to be your father and go to the mines while he remains in the hospital. Then, before the sun rises you must be far away with him on the road to China."

Just then a peculiar cry was heard from the Nihilist guard.

"That means the gendarmes are coming to take me back to the mines. You must away, Ivan and Leo, and I must seek to accomplish the deception upon which my life depends," said Vladimir Madro.

CHAPTER XVI.—The Exile's Stratagem.

Ivan waited not a moment after his father besought him to leave the hospital of the prison mines. The youthful messenger of the czar passed out of the building by one door just as a file of gendarmes entered by another. In the reception-room of the hospital the gendarmes halted, and the captain of the company handed the unsuspected Nihilist guard on duty there an order addressed to the surgeon-in-chief, directing that he deliver Exile No. 104—Vladimir Madro—to the gendarmes. The guard received the order, and said:

"I will present the paper to the surgeon at once."

Then he passed through a door leading to the office of the superintendent of the hospital. But instead of proceeding at once to the presence of the surgeon-in-chief, whose endorsement of the gendarmes' order was required before an exile could be removed from the hospital, the secret friend of Valdimir Madro delayed on the way. And while the guard waited in the passage, before delivering the order for the return of Ivan's father to the mines, that unfortunate man and Leo improved the time to make ready for the great deception they had planned.

Very quickly Leo made his disguise of face. Then Vladimir joined him behind the curtains of his cot, and the two exchanged garments. Leo put on the garb of the mines worn by Vladimir, including the brass plate he carried on his breast, stamped with the number 104. Some little time elapsed, and then the Nihilist guard entered the ward, followed by the gendarmes.

"Convict No. 104!" called out the guard.

"Here!" answered Leo promptly, and he stepped forward. His heart beat fast, but outwardly he remained calm.

"You are ordered back to the mines. Gendarmes, this is your man," said the guard.

"Forward! To the mines! March!" ordered the captain, and with Leo in the place of the man Count Petrevitch had doomed the gendarmes marched out of the hospital.

Ivan, concealed where he had taken his place upon quitting the hospital, saw the gendarmes come forth out of the building at last, and he observed the convict whom they brought with them.

"Thank heaven!" murmured Ivan, and he added:

"Now to return to Mira and tell her what has taken place."

When the gendarmes had passed on their way to the mines Ivan started to immediately return to the cabin occupied by his beloved sister; but on the way, as he was passing a little drinking shop, he heard the sounds of boisterous revelry within, and approaching the door he looked through a small window beside it and saw Nicholas and his Tartar comrades within. They were drinking hot vodki with a truly Russian relish.

"Ah," thought Ivan, "if I could only secure the order which will on the morrow seal my father's fate, unless I spirit him away to-night."

But the words of the Tartar gave Ivan the unwelcome assurance that there was no possibility of his securing the order which Petrevitch had sent, for Nicholas said:

"I gave the order to the governor's deputy, and after reading it he locked it in the great safe at the governor's office. It could not be more secure."

Ivan waited to hear no more. Proceeding swiftly he went on to Mira's cabin without meeting anyone, and he found his sister anxiously awaiting his coming. In a few words, hastily spoken, the boy messenger acquainted Mira with all that had occurred at the hospital.

"Brave, noble Leo. He has indeed a hero's heart," said the young girl in fond tones of ad-

miration when she heard what her lover had done.

"Yes, yes," assented Ivan. "But now to our part of the task to save our father. Listen: I have thought it all out. Do you make preparations for immediate flight, and accompany me to the house of my friend, the merchant, in whose stable my team and posting-sledge is waiting, I will soon have everything in readiness, assisted by my friend, for our flight with our father. I can count on the Nihilist guard at the hospital, and I will bring our father to my friend's house, if all goes well, in less than one hour's time."

Mira hastily dressed herself for a journey, and well muffled in furs she was soon walking at Ivan's side on the way to the house of his friend. Reaching the abode of the merchant in safety the brother and sister made known their purpose, and Ivan's friend agreed to help him.

"Go to the hospital at once. I will see that fresh and speedy horses are ready before you return, and from my store I will procure all the supplies you will need for your journey," said the merchant.

Ivan hastened away and retraced his steps to the hospital. The Nihilist guard was still on duty and Ivan acquainted the former with his plan. In a few moments Ivan's father was brought out. They went to the merchant's, where everything for the escape had been provided. In a short time Ivan and his father were driving away behind a fast team of horses.

Meanwhile the gendarmes had marched Leo straight to the mines and put him to work. During the day an old man, one of the prisoners, was given a terrible whipping with a rawhide whip. Leo could not stand such cruelty. He seized the whip out of the hands of the cruel guard and then, clubbing the whip, stretched the guard senseless at his feet.

CHAPTER XVII.—On the Scaffold.

The convicts were all amazed at the daring deed of Leo. They shuddered as a moment subsequently the comrades of the fallen guard rushed at the young man. The poor slaves of the mines thought that their companion had surely brought upon himself some cruel punishment. Leo sprang back against the rocky wall of the mines as the guards came at him. In his right hand the disguised hero still clutched the knout which he had wrested from the brutal driver. Brandishing the heavy stock of the cruel whip, Leo faced his assailants bravely, while his eyes flashed fiercely, and the hot flush of righteous indignation mantled his face. The guards were about to make a combined rush upon Leo when a voice rang out behind them, saying:

"Hold there, men!"

The succeeding moment the superintendent of the mines, followed by four gendarmes, came forward.

"Is not that man convict No. 104?" asked the superintendent, indicating Leo.

"Yes, noble master. But he has just knocked down Michael," replied one of the guards.

"Enough. I only wished to be sure of my

man. He will never make any more trouble in the mines. The governor has returned, and he has received the czar's order for the immediate execution of convict No. 104," said the superintendent.

Then to the gendarmes:

"March that man out of the mines," and he indicated Leo. The latter dropped his whip and, stepping forward, to the surprise of all, he said:

"I go with you willingly."

He was led out of the mines and straight toward the public square, where it was the custom to publicly execute such of the czar's victims as were condemned to death. About an hour previously the governor had arrived, and his deputy had almost immediately placed the order for Vladimir Madro's execution, which Count Petrevitch had forged, before his superior. The will of the czar is the law of Siberia, and unquestioned obedience is demanded by the tyrant of all his subjects. The governor entertained no doubt of the genuineness of the forged order of execution, and when he had read it he issued the orders necessary for carrying out the mandate, and so Leo, in his disguise of Vladimir Madro, was conducted to the place of execution.

Near by stood Nicholas the Tartar and his comrades, feeling triumphant at last. Leo ascended the steps leading to a rude platform which was the scaffold, upon which the spectators all thought he was soon to die, and the executioner took his place beside him. All present marveled at the doomed man's firm step and calm bravery. The governor enjoined silence, and he slowly read the order for the execution aloud. When this was done, in accordance with the custom, he addressed Leo, saying:

"Have you anything to say, Vladimir Madro, why the order of the czar should not be executed against you?"

"Yes," replied Leo, in ringing tones, "you cannot execute me, because I am not Vladimir Madro. Behold, Leo Avondroff stands before you!"

The governor and all the assembled throng were for the moment thunderstruck.

"I see it all," cried the superintendent of the hospital. "Vladimir Madro was at the hospital when this man was brought there. They have exchanged identities, and while Leo Avondroff was taken to the mines last night Vladimir Madro escaped from the hospital."

The governor saw that the superintendent had solved the mystery, and he ordered Leo to speak at once and reveal all he knew of Madro's escape. Leo refused, and he was then hurried back to the mines, and at once an investigation was begun looking to the recapture of Ivan's father. Nicholas the Tartar was bitterly disappointed, but offered the services of himself and his men to find Vladimir Madro, vowing that he would yet drag the escaped exile back to his doom.

While Nicholas was searching about the town there was an arrival of importance. Count Petrevitch drove into the village, and made his way to the residence of the governor. The villainous count soon learned of Vladimir's escape, and his rage and alarm were terrible. But he hastened to Mira's cabin, only to learn from the old

domestic whom he found there of Mira's unexplained absence.

"The girl has fled with her father!" cried Count Petrevitch, rushing out of the cabin.

Just beyond the door he came face to face with Nicholas, and an explanation ensued between them, and the Tartar said:

"I have found the exile's trail. Last night a sledge left the town, taking the road to China. The sledge contained three persons, two of whom I am sure were Mira and her father."

Half an hour later Nicholas the Tartar and his men, with a score of Cossacks at their back, were speeding on the trail of the boy messenger.

CHAPTER XVIII.—Captured.

When Leo was conducted back to the mines, in accordance with the command of the governor of Timsk, he was forthwith consigned to a pit-like cell, which was a veritable living sepulcher. While we leave the young Nihilist in the prison mines, and while Count Petrevitch, in a state of anxiety and anger, was fuming about the town of Timsk, we will follow the flight of Ivan, the boy messenger of Siberia, and his father and sister. Hope grew stronger in the hearts of the fugitives as the distance between them and the dreaded prison-mines was increased, and yet no signs of pursuit were discovered. One evening the fugitives were passing through the defiles of the Baikals, when all at once a shrill whistle sounded from the mountain side above. Glancing in the direction of the sound Ivan and his father beheld four mounted men. Instantly the fugitives recognized the uniform of the Cossack guards who patrolled the mountains.

"Discovered!" ejaculated Ivan.

As he spoke the patrolmen wheeled their horses and disappeared without a word. Ivan lashed the already tired and well-nigh fagged-out team forward along the pass. On and on went the weary team, making a gallant final effort as though they understood how much depended upon them now. But suddenly Ivan heard the whistle signals of the patrolmen ahead as they called to each other. A moment of breathless suspense ensued as the team forged ahead, and then from the rear came a fierce shout. The fugitives glanced backward instantly, and then for a moment their hearts stood still, their faces paled, and the grewsome shadow of despair fell upon them, for there, under the moonlight, coming along the pass in swift pursuit, they beheld Nicholas, the Tartar, and his bravos, accompanied by the Cossacks.

Then in a short time the fugitives' sledge was surrounded by Nicholas' band and the mountain patrolmen and the exhausted team was halted.

"I arrest you all in the name of the czar!" shouted Nicholas the Tartar exultantly.

Resistance was useless. Nicholas turned to the leader of the mountain patrol, and explained that he had been sent in pursuit of the fugitives.

"And now," said Count Petrevitch's faithful henchman, in sinister tones, "we will take you

all back to the mines, my birds. You know the penalty of aiding the escape of an exile, Ivan, and you can look forward to a life of slavery in the mines. As for the girl, Count Petrevitch awaits her at Timsk."

Nicholas did not delay in beginning the return journey with his prisoners. Fresh horses for Ivan's sledge were procured from the patrol, and then the vehicle in which the exiled father and his children had escaped was used to convey them back into the awful captivity of the prison-mines. But many days had been consumed in the flight of the captives, and many more must elapse before they again reached Timsk.

The journey back to Timsk was made as swiftly as was consistent with the safety of the captives, and while they are traversing the bleak steppes, drawing nearer day by day to the dreaded place, where, it seems, the final scene in the drama of their eventful lives must be enacted, we will precede them there.

Count Petrevitch was busy. He understood that sooner or later the discovery must be made that the warrant he had forged for the execution of Vladimir Madro would be discovered to be a forgery. The count thought he had covered his tracks so well that the forgery could not be traced to him, even when it was discovered. Now he was occupied in getting ready forged passports which he intended should enable Nicholas the Tartar and his men to get out of Russia, where they could not be brought forward to witness against him in the event that, by any chance, suspicion should be turned upon himself.

Perhaps Petrevitch's friend, the governor, had some suspicion that the count was not sincere in all he would have him believe, but, be that as it may, the governor was a true Russian, and diplomatic motives and self-interest impelled him to assure, at least, to credit all the count told him. Leo Avondroff had been visited in his prison cell in the depths of the mines by the governor, who appeared to be fully determined to extort from the young Nihilist a full confession as to who aided the escape of Vladimir Madro.

That there were others implicated the governor was convinced. But Leo remained obdurate, and refused to speak. Then the governor ordered that the torture of starvation be tried in his case. But still Leo, with the determination of a hero, remained silent. When it was found that the young exile would really choose rather to die than betray the unknown friends of Vladimir Madro, the governor desisted from his prosecution, and, though still kept in solitary confinement, Leo was allowed sufficient food to sustain life.

The short-lived twilight of a winter's day was deepening into darkness, and the first flakes of white which presaged a coming storm were falling from the straggling streets and low-roofed cabins of the town at the prison mines some weeks subsequent to the date of Vladimir Madro's flight. The governor and Count Petrevitch were seated in the dining-room at the residence of the former. They had just dined, and were lingering over their wine converging, when a servant entered, saying:

"If you please, most high born, there is a

man without who demands to see the noble Count Petrevitch at once. He bade me present this."

"The servant placed a soiled scrap of paper before the count as he thus spoke, and upon it, scrawled in a rude hand, Count Petrevitch read the name:

"Nicholas."

"The Tartar has returned!" exclaimed the count, and he added: "At once admit the man who seeks an audience with me."

A moment later Nicholas the Tartar entered the apartment.

"Ah, good Nicholas, I see by the look on your face that you have succeeded!" exclaimed the count in gratified tones as soon as he saw the dark, triumphant-looking face of the Tartar.

"Yes, sir, I have recaptured Vladimir Madro and his daughter. Ivan the boy messenger was with them, so I was right in thinking he accompanied them, and that we were deceived when we thought he had perished on the steppes."

"Good!" exclaimed the count.

The governor echoed his words and said:

"I shall have the captured party consigned to the ostrog or temporary prison for the night, and on the morrow——"

"The execution of Vladimir Madro will take place," put in the count.

CHAPTER XIX.—Conclusion.

The Tartar and Count Petrevitch presently withdrew, and then the latter said:

"Fortune has favored us in one most important point. Clearly, although it did not fall into our hands, it must be that Ivan Madro lost the czar's secret dispatch on the way to Siberia."

"Yes. That is certain. But, sir, one thing still troubles me," replied the Tartar.

"What is that?" asked the count.

"Peter Narki, the boy messenger's yemschick, is missing. He did not arrive at Timsk in company with Ivan, and I do not know what has become of him."

"Have you questioned Ivan?"

"Yes, and the boy says the yemschick became separated from him in a snowstorm as they were escaping from a band of Zingari robbers."

"Ah, no doubt the yemschick was slain by the Zingaris."

To the ostrog Vladimir Madro and his son and daughter had now already been conveyed. The ostrog was divided into several compartments—small, cell-like rooms—and Vladimir Madro and his devoted children were now separated, each alone in one of the ostrog cells. Mira's cell was next to the one in which Ivan was confined. There was no door between them, and they were but a few feet apart. The Nihilist guard of the hospital was still unsuspected, it seemed, and by a fortunate chance, he was now on duty in the passage without the cells of Ivan and Mira. While Count Petrevitch was on his way to the ostrog the Nihilist guard was at Ivan's door. He unlocked it and said to Ivan:

"I would serve you all I can, brother, but out-

side a double guard has been placed, and I cannot assist you to escape. If there is anything in my power you would like me to do I will gladly undertake it."

"Grant me an interview with my sister in her cell, and give me a revolver," replied Ivan.

For answer the guard drew his pistol, and placed it in Ivan's hand. Then he opened wide the door, and led Ivan to Mira. The door of the poor girl's cell had just closed upon Ivan when, to the guard's surprise, a Cossack came to relieve him, and he was ordered to his quarters. He could not trust the relief, and so he was compelled to go away and leave Ivan in Mira's cell. Scarcely, however, had Ivan greeted his sister when they heard the Count Petrevitch in the passage without demanding admission to Mira's cell. There was a closet in the cell, and into this Ivan darted as Count Petrevitch, a moment later, was admitted. Mira retreated against the rear wall as the count closed the door behind him, and confronted her. Petrevitch spoke.

"Mine at last!" he fairly hissed, and with one stride he was at the girl's side and grasped her by the wrist.

Mira uttered a cry of indignant anger. The count's back was toward the door of the closet; stealthily it opened, and Ivan darted out. Like a flash his clubbed revolver fell upon the count's head, and the wretch dropped senseless at Mira's feet. Then Ivan gave his sister some instructions. Together they bound and gagged the villain and dragged him into the closet and closed the door. This accomplished, Ivan put on the count's cap and threw his long cloak over his head and shoulders as the count had worn it.

"I have vainly implored an interview with the governor. Now I go to seek him disguised thus so as to pass the guards. I'll tell the governor all, and beg him to delay our father's execution until he can hear from the czar," said Ivan.

The boy spy succeeded in making his way to the governor and told him his story. But the governor was not moved, and in despair Ivan was hurried back to his cell. Then the count was found and released from his bonds, but he was too weak to stand alone. Ivan had struck a hard blow, and the prison physician said the count's life was in danger, and he was taken to the hospital.

Morning dawned and at an early hour Vladimir Madro was led forth to the scaffold, and he had ascended the fatal structure when a man forced his way breathlessly through the crowd, and reaching the governor's side he shouted:

"Hold! An order from the czar!"

It was Peter Narki, the yemshick. The faithful fellow had arrived in Timsk at last, and in his hand he held the bullet containing the czar's secret dispatch, commanding that Vladimir Madro be brought to St. Petersburg at once. The Governor read the dispatch aloud. Then Nicholas the Tartar, bent on a desperate play, sprang forward, crying:

"Governor, I think that dispatch is a forgery, gotten up by the Nihilists. But if not, as the order for Vladimir Madro's execution is dated later than it, I believe the czar issued the order of execution to countermand it."

"That is a lie, Nicholas the Tartar, and well you know it!" thundered a voice.

The succeeding moment the speaker was at the side of the governor. He was mounted upon a horse which dropped under him as he reached the governor. But as the horse fell, ridden to death, his rider gained his feet, and then the governor, as well as Nicholas the Tartar, recognized Morrisco, the deputy of General Mellikoff, the head of the "third section."

"Arrest that man and his Tartar comrades!" thundered Morrisco. The gendarmes surrounded Nicholas and his bravos, and they were disarmed in a trice, and by Morrisco's order marched to the ostrog. Then the police agent explained that the dispatch which Ivan had sent while on his way to Timsk telling the czar of the attempt to prevent his secret dispatch getting to Timsk had been received after a long delay, and that he had posted on as soon as he could in person.

Vladimir Madro was at once liberated, and he and Morrisco held a private interview. During this Madro revealed sufficient of the plot of the nobles to induce Morrisco to order Count Petrevitch to be held a prisoner at the ostrog, waiting the will of the czar. Vladimir Madro told Morrisco that he meant to ask the pardon of Leo as a reward for revealing the names of the traitor nobles, and requested that the young man be taken to St. Petersburg with him.

To this Morrisco assented, and the next morning all our friends set out for the Russian capital. When Alexander heard that Petrevitch was the head of the conspirators' league, he ordered him to the prison mines for life, and directed that Nicholas the Tartar should share his employer's fate. When Vladimir had concluded his statement the czar thanked him, and asked, after signing Vladimir's pardon:

"Now my good man, tell me how the Czar of Russia can further show his gratitude to a faithful subject?"

"Sire, my only daughter, Mira, is the betrothed of Leo Avondroff. If you will pardon him he will leave Russia forever with my daughter as his bride, and you will confer the greatest boon on your humble subject."

The czar hesitated for a moment, but suddenly he said:

"Leo Avondroff is pardoned, but he must leave Russia."

Some months later Vladimir Madro, Ivan, Leo and Mira, now Leo's happy bride, arrived in America, where they had come to seek a new home in the land of liberty. The czar had offered to reward Ivan by making him chief of the courier service, but the boy thought he would prefer to seek his fortune in America. In the United States all our friends prospered beyond their hopes, and a few years later faithful Peter joined them in their new home. The future of all was full of happiness and content.

Next week's issue will contain "MONTE CRISTO, JR.; or, THE DIAMONDS OF THE BORGHIAS."

CURRENT NEWS

NEEDLES OF RADIUM LOST

The *Medical Record*, New York, relates that the treatment of a charity patient in an Oklahoma City hospital has resulted in the loss of radium valued at between \$3,000 and \$3,500 by a group of doctors in that city. The radium in two needles was placed in a cancerous growth. The patient disappeared with the radium, and police investigation has failed to reveal any trace of his whereabouts.

FLOUR SACKS AS UNDERWEAR

Several thousand American flour sacks of cotton have been turned into underclothes for little ones in Japan, whose garments were destroyed in the quake, say travelers returning here.

A semicircle, but from the seamed end, affords a hole for the neck and slicing off each corner adjacent permits the arms to wave freely. In most instances the lettered advertisements remain, with the result that many local cities in the United States are well known to the young folks.

FOSSILS DISCOVERED THROUGH X-RAYS

A curious application of the X-rays to the discovery of unseen things has been made by Professor Lemoine at Rheims. The chalk strata in that part of France contains the fossil bones of birds, reptiles and mammals, and frequently these are shattered in the attempt at removal. It occurred to Professor Lemoine that the embedded fossils might be photographed by the aid of X-rays, since the latter pass readily through chalk but are largely intercepted by the phosphates of bones. The resulting photographs clearly indicated the details of the hidden fossils.

UTILIZING SEWER GAS

An Australian engineer has put sewer gas to work driving an engine. He built a sixteen horsepower plant and collected the gas which emanated from the septic tanks of his town of Parramatta to use as fuel for his engine. The supply turned out to be so sure that the plant can be left to run for days at a time without any attention.

In this particular installation the work is merely to pump out the sewage itself; but nevertheless it saved the cost of the coal.

TAKE NOTICE!

MYSTERY MAGAZINE, No. 152

is now on the newsstands and contains the marvelous mystery story —

“WEAPONS OF HATE”

By ERIC HOWARD

It should be read by every boy who is interested in detective tales.

The beginning of a new Serial of intense interest,

“RED MURRAY — KIDNAPER”

by J. B. WARRENTON, also appears in this number.

The short stories which this issue contains are of special interest to our readers. The titles are

THE KALONG KISS, by Douglas M. Dold

WHISPERING EYES, by Ernest A. Phillips

THE BARSTOW CASE, by J. Werner Phelps

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All of these stories were selected from among our best writers and hold the reader's interest from beginning to end.

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Breaking The Record

— OR —

AROUND THE WORLD IN THIRTY-THREE DAYS

By WILLIAM WADE

CHAPTER XVI.—(Continued).

They rushed through the air at a tremendous rate, and Dick felt more the sensation of flying than he had ever felt before, being sure that the biplane was making all of eighty miles an hour, if not more.

The wind increased, and although it did not incommode them he noticed that they were obliged to go with it and that it was not taking them in the direction they were supposed to want to go.

"You are not making Vancouver?" he said to the aeronaut, at length. "I should say we were going to the south decidedly."

"So we are," said the other shortly.

"And that we are over the land instead of over the sea or the water."

"So we are," and the man attended strictly to his machine for some little time.

"I don't know where we are going, but it is not to Vancouver," said Dick to Trix, after a long pause. "I suppose it is all right. This man appears to know how to run his machine, and maybe we cannot go just as we would like on account of the wind. There is a lot of it. Are you comfortable, my girl?"

"Quite so," for Trix was shielded from the wind and seemed to be enjoying herself very much.

They lost the steamer entirely, and Dick was sure that they were going at the rate of a hundred miles an hour, but, as they sailed with the utmost smoothness and there seemed no likelihood of anything untoward happening, he made up his mind to take things as he found them and be satisfied with landing anywhere the aeronaut chose.

There was no opportunity to hold a conversation in such a place and with the wind blowing as it did, and nothing was said. Dick gradually noted, however, that their course was very nearly due south, and that they were over land, that there were mountains and rivers and big towns below, and finally that they were evidently making for one of these in the distance.

Some time had elapsed since they had been picked up by the biplane, a number of hours, certainly, though just how many Dick could not make sure of, as he had left his watch behind him, and now he could see that the sun was dropping down toward the horizon.

"We will be there shortly," said the airman, who had not spoken for some time. "We will make it, all right. I cannot land you right in the town, but you will find carriages to take you to it at hand. Some town that!"

"Might I ask what it is?" said Dick.

"Certainly. It is Seattle, one of the speediest little towns in——"

"Seattle!" gasped Dick. "And I was going to Vancouver."

"Yes, but I couldn't help it. Wind took me straight here, and I reckon the machine knew where she wanted to go and kept straight for home. You can get a train direct for Vancouver if you like."

"I don't like," laughed Dick. "What day is this—the day of the month?"

"Saturday, the sixteenth."

"And we have got to be in New York by the twenty-first!" muttered Dick. "I wonder how we are going to do it?"

"I'll get you there if you'll wait," said the other, in a careless tone.

They landed outside the town, but, as the airman had said, there were carriages which would take them in, many having come to see the return of the biplane, and there was no difficulty in getting to town.

Dick borrowed a coat from the aeronaut, whom he thanked for his picking them up, and then rode to town and put up at a good hotel, telling the proprietor how he chanced to be without money and with so few clothes and wet in the bargain, but promising to make good as soon as he could communicate with Mark.

Trix was made comfortable, and then Dick telegraphed to Mark at Vancouver, telling the young millionaire he was safe, but waiting for him.

He received no answer to his message at the time when he thought he should, and he began to worry, and decided to send word to the detective agency and ask for funds to take him home.

Then a newspaper reporter came in and asked him all about his trip in the biplane and many other things, desiring to make them the subject of a special article for the next day's issue.

Dick told about Trix falling overboard and being picked up, and of the trip to Seattle, but nothing of Ildone and not much of the trip around the world to break the record.

"I wish your friend were here," the reporter said. "I could work him into this article fine. When do you expect him? He is coming to Seattle, isn't he? This is the best place to start from on a trip across the country. They all do it. Did he say anything about it?"

"He was thinking of taking the Canadian Pacific," said Dick.

"Foolish; nothing in it; sure to lose time if he did; wonder he did not think of this at the very start. Where is he? I can send a wireless to him now and start him on the right track."

"You know as much as I do about it," said Dick, in disgust. "I have been trying to get him, but have not succeeded."

"You should go out to-night on the Continental express; but ever; our business men take it on their week-end trips to New York; we call it our theatre train; beats the Canadian all hollow. You better engage places for your party to-night. Then you'll make New York by Thursday. Beating the record, are you?"

"We have beaten it so far, I believe, but I am afraid we won't do it, after all."

(To be continued.)

GOOD READING

DEER BREAK STORE WINDOWS

Shortly after 3 o'clock the other morning several officers heard a crash of glass and ran to the store at 93 Main street, Worcester, Mass., where a large pane had been shattered.

Believing the store was being robbed, the officers sprinted and arrived in time to see two deer leap from the store window and run away through Market street.

A short time later a policeman reported that he had seen the two deer, one with antlers, on a nearby street, headed toward Green Hill park.

RAT SKINS SELL WELL

It is proposed to establish a business in Calcutta of procuring and preparing the skins of the brown rat, which is very numerous in that metropolis of India.

It has been found that the skin of this animal is well adapted to a variety of purposes, such as the binding of books, the making of purses, gloves and other articles. It is said that already the traffic in this commodity amounts to about \$250,000 a year in Great Britain and advertisements have appeared for supplies of skins of the brown rat in lots of from 100 to 10,000.

It is expected that a very profitable industry on this order can be established in Calcutta.

PAYS EMPLOYEES \$411,000 IN BONUS

Four hundred and eleven thousand dollars was distributed recently to employees of Alexander Smith & Sons Carpet Company of Yonkers as the twenty-sixth semi-annual dividend according to the firm's bonus plan started in 1911. This brings the total bonuses paid since that time to \$5,808,000.

The plan was instituted by Alexander Smith Cochran, former husband of Ganna Walsa, the present Mrs. Harold F. McCormick. Under the plan employees are paid according to their priority of employment and to the nature of their work. Percentages range from 2 to 15 per cent. of employees' wages for the preceding six months.

There are 6,628 employees of the company. Each received a bonus. The distribution was about \$600 per man, but because of the sliding scale older employees received much more than this and newer ones less. When the plan was instituted in 1911 there were about 1,100 employees.

STAMP ISSUE FOR MANZONI

Italy is taking a leading place among the countries of the world in issuing commemorative postage stamps. A series of six values will soon appear to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Alessandro Manzoni, who is called the founder of the romantic school in Italian literature. This will be the fifth commemorative issue by Italy in less than four years.

Manzoni is best known by his "I Promessi Sposi," or "The Betrothed," which made its appearance in 1822 and which was called by Sir

Walter Scott the finest novel ever written. It raised Manzoni to the first rank of literary fame, and scenes from that work will be depicted on four of the new stamps. A picture of the house in which Manzoni was born in Milan in 1785 will appear on one stamp, and on the highest value, 5 lire, will be his portrait.

Manzoni lived to be 88, dying on May 22, 1873, and he is buried in Milan. Verdi's Requiem was composed especially in his memory. It is interesting to note that in early life he was regarded as a dunce in school. Besides his great work he composed several poems and tragedies, including a famous lyric on the death of Napoleon in 1821.

In 1921 Italy issued a set of three stamps in commemoration of Dante and in the following year a set was issued in honor of Mazzini. In 1921 there also appeared a commemorative set in honor of the third anniversary of the victory of the Piave, and another set to celebrate the reunion of the former Venetian territory, long in possession of Austria, with Italy. The first Italian commemorative stamps appeared in 1910 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the freedom of Sicily. There were two values bearing a portrait of Garibaldi, and later in the same year another set, also with Garibaldi's head, was issued on the fiftieth anniversary of the national plebiscite of the Southern States. This was followed in 1911 with the Italian Kingdom jubilee set, and in 1912, when the Campanile at Venice was re-erected, two special stamps were issued to commemorate that event.

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INTERESTING RADIO NEWS AND HINTS

When you use a variometer between the aerial and ground for tuning it is preferable to also connect in series with the ground a variable condenser of about forty-three plates.

When testing, the "B" battery will soon be ruined by testing it by means of the spark. Such action short circuits the battery. Such battery should be tested with a voltmeter, never by an ammeter.

A regenerative set is equal to a non-regenerative set using one stage of radio frequency with regeneration unless you are technically inclined. Radio frequency will amplify a weak signal so that the detector tube will rectify it, but as a rule a regenerative set will accomplish practically the same results. Radio frequency is employed to amplify weak signals, while audio frequency is employed for giving volume.

When outside aerials are not permitted and an inside one is used, connect one end of the wire to the aerial connection on your instrument, run the wire up to the picture molding, laying it out nice and straight so that it cannot be seen. The distant end is not connected to anything. The aerial must not be grounded, but the ground wire from the instrument can be connected to a radiator or water pipe.

All condensers are measurable in units of electrical capacity. For usual purposes the microfarad has been chosen for the unit of measurement of small condensers used for radio work. It is found that, other things being equal, the capacity of a condenser depends upon the number of plates. But other factors also enter into the calculation of condenser capacity; the dielectric or separating medium, the distances between the plates and the size of the plates. Thus it is possible, by varying any or all of these factors, to change one way or the other the capacity of a condenser. Varying any one of these factors and keeping the others constant produces a variable condenser.

Any one is certainly taking a chance when he puts eight volts on the filament of a tube, even if the cells are nearly exhausted. Incidentally, using the battery when it is nearly discharged, is not the best thing for it, as a storage battery should never be allowed to run entirely down. The best way is to use only six volts and then, if you have a charging apparatus, charge the outfit up about every third night, if it is used every evening. Just connect the charger on before going to bed, and in the morning the battery should be fully charged. It is well to test with a hydrometer, though, as an overcharge is about as bad for the battery as leaving it fully discharged. Keep the battery at about the same charge and it will last for years.

Sometimes it is advisable to employ a 23-plate condenser across the secondary of a coupler. Its

purpose is to aid in tuning the secondary coil thereby rendering better selectivity and in turn tuning out the unwanted stations. Of course if the set is in close proximity to a transmitting station it is of no use to try and tune the stations out with such an instrument. It will help at times but its main purpose is to tune out stations located at a distance from the receiver. A fixed condenser must be kept in the circuit if you intend to hear the concerts clearly. The type of crystal suited for local reception is corborundum, gelena or one of the synthetic crystals now on the market.

DEAD SPOTS

The Bureau of Standards is trying to determine the cause of "dead spots" in the ether which seem to form an almost impenetrable barrier between a number of cities in the United States. Montreal hears Philadelphia concerts clearly, but sections of New York State which lie between cannot hear the Quaker City with any intensity. Philadelphians have trouble in hearing Newark and New York and stations as loud as KDKA at Pittsburgh. A pronounced "dead spot" is reported to exist in the ether tract between Baltimore and Washington, D. C. "Dead spots" are thought to be caused by partial absorption of the Hertzian waves.

Ship stations in Long Island Sound find it difficult to establish satisfactory communication with shore stations on the Atlantic side of the island, although the widest point across the island is only forty miles. When ships are close to the Jersey coast much difficulty is experienced in establishing radio contact with New York if the distance is over sixty miles. Listeners in Atlantic City report trouble in picking up loud signals from Philadelphia and New York. It is thought that this may be due to the sandy nature of the soil, which contains metallic particles which have a tendency to absorb the electromagnetic waves. It is known that sand dunes produce a shielding effect.

Signals from Pittsburgh are said to be feeble when they reach Cleveland, and a similar condition exists between Boston and the western section of Massachusetts. It is the opinion of some who have studied the situation that iron deposits in the Monson district serve as a shield and decrease the Boston signal strength in Western Massachusetts. Since the early days of wireless it has been thought that the hills and mountains absorb and deflect the Hertzian waves. The naval radio station at Otter Cliffs, Bar Harbor, Me., is located in a sort of pocket formed by two mountains. This station is noted for reliable reception from European stations and from ships at sea. Distress calls originating 900 miles east of Bermuda have been picked up at Otter Cliffs when no other station along the Atlantic Coast seemed to hear the S. O. S. Experts advanced the theory that ore deposits in the mountains acted as a "back stop" for the waves, deflecting them to the antennae in the valley.

Signals in transit across forests have lost much of their power, especially in the Spring and early Summer when the sap and foliage make the trees better conductors of electricity. Radio waves passing over and through the trees give up energy just as in striking a steel building. If a short length of wire serving as an antenna can absorb sufficient energy from a passing wave to create a sound which can be heard several hundred feet away from the phones, one can realize how much energy may be intercepted by a large steel building with its electric wiring and pipes connected to the ground. Such absorption is particularly noticeable when short wave lengths are used.

When a wave length is eight to fourteen miles long "dead spots" seem to cause little interference. Such a wave is comparatively long compared to steel structures, and for this reason it is thought they do not obstruct the wave's path to such a great extent.

One theory given to account for "dead spots," chiefly the one supposed to exist between Washington and Baltimore, is that numerous high-tension cables and conduits absorb the radio impulses. Yet, despite the great net work of high tension lines radiating from Niagara Falls, listeners in that locality find it ideal for reception of radio concerts from all directions.

The most plausible theory to explain "dead spots" seems to be the presence of mineral deposits in the hills and mountains. However, the direction in which the transmitting aerial and the receiving antenna points has a great deal to do with the strength of signals from different stations. Ships have been known to receive strong signals from distant stations when suddenly a shift in the course would point the antenna in a different direction and the signals would become faint. If the antenna extends east and west with the lead-in taken off the western end, it will be most suitable for reception from the west. Imagination coupled with the directional effect of the antenna has helped many radio listeners to have a vision of "dead spots" in the ether.

THE DIODE VALVE

During the last summer the reflex mode of reception gained a wide usage among radio fans who want a circuit that will work on dry cell tubes—a circuit for a portable set.

Even now there is a demand for a single tube or two tube reflex receiver for use by the beginner who wants to make the tubes perform double or triple duty as a radio frequency amplifier, an audio frequency amplifier, and sometimes also as a detector.

Most of the simple reflex circuits, however, have made use of the crystal rather than the vacuum tube as a detector. This, of course, simplifies things enormously: there is one less tube used, there is also less drain on the "A" and "B" batteries and the circuit is also less complicated. And yet there is not any appreciable loss in signal strength because the radio frequency signal has been amplified to such an extent that the sensitivity of the crystal does not make very much difference.

There is one serious drawback to the use of a crystal as a detector in one of these single tube

reflex sets nevertheless. This is in the matter of adjustment. The operator has to be forever fooling with the "catwhisker" and eventually he becomes tired of it and gives up in disgust. This is not so when more than one stage of radio frequency amplification is used, because the radio frequency signal then becomes so strong that the crystal adjustment makes relatively little difference.

Another drawback with the crystal detector in a simple single tube crystal reflex receiver is the fact that such a simple set seldom makes use of a potentiometer for controlling regeneration. It is all done with the crystal adjustment.

In other words, they may have the set working nicely, receiving signals from WHN, and wish to change to another wave length; say, to listen to WJZ on a higher wave length. As soon as they tune to WJZ they find him surrounded by a peculiar whistle and must change the adjustment of the crystal before they have the signals coming in again. A change back to the original wave length again necessitates a change in crystal adjustment to take out the "squeak."

A Fleming valve, or Diode tube as it is called by one manufacturer, is one of the original vacuum tubes having two elements, a filament and a plate. The tube when used as a detector alone, without any radio frequency amplification, is a steady, reliable detector.

The tube used in this way has two distinct advantages in the reflex set. It produces as good a signal as the crystal; it needs no adjustment for sensitivity, and it requires no further adjustment for wave length changes. Set the filament rheostat to the most sensitive point and the set is ready at all times.

The parts necessary to build the set are: A 1, variocoupler; B1, variable condenser .0005 mfd; C 1, radio frequency transformer; D 1, audio frequency transformer (for first stage); E 1, WD12 vacuum tube; F 1, Diode tube; G 1, fixed condenser .001 mfd; H 1, 1½ volt dry cell; I 1, small "A" battery, 45 volts; J 2, rheostats, 6 ohms, Diode tube socket; M 1, pair phones; N, panel; O, cabinet; P, connecting wire; Q, binding posts; R, solder.

In building the set the best procedure would be to mount the variocoupler on the left end of the panel (looking from the front) with the variable condenser beside it. The two rheostats should be mounted next, beside the condenser, with the WD-12 and the Diode tube directly in back of them, respectively. Then mount the two transformers on the base in such a manner that the connections will be as short as possible.

In wiring up the set, connect the two fixed condensers, one across the primary of the audio frequency transformer and the other across the phones and the "B" battery. Keep all the wires as short as you are able to and keep the grid connections isolated from the other parts of the wiring as much as possible.

If you already have a one, two or three tube reflex set with a crystal detector you may use one of these tubes, obtaining an extra rheostat, a dry cell of 1½ volts and connect it directly to your present crystal detector stand. This will enable you to compare the two methods of detection for yourself.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, MARCH 12, 1924

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

HOUND RUNS FOX TWO DAYS

Starting with a pack of nine other canines, in a chase for a fox, a thoroughbred fox-hound, owned by C. D. Mitchell of Farmer City, Ill., ran for two days and six hours before it finally fell exhausted. All of the dogs with the single exception gave up the chase. The owner supposed that an accident had befallen the missing animal.

During the afternoon of the second day, after the chase started, a farmer near Onarga noticed a fox limping along and, a short time afterward, a hound. The latter fell exhausted after making an unsuccessful attempt to get through a fence. A tag on the collar denoted the owner.

The dog's feet were raw and bleeding from the long run and it is believed to have followed the fox for fifty to seventy-five miles, probably running in a circle.

A METER FOR THE COAL CHUTE

From England comes the announcement of the invention of a registering meter for measuring fine coal, grain, or other material which is loaded through chutes.

The device consists of a bar of metal, twisted to form a screw of very long pitch, which nearly fills the chute. The coal or grain, falling down the chute, flows around this screw and makes it turn. A meter is attached to the screw and adjusted so that it registers the quantity of material that flows past; the hand on the meter dial gives a direct reading, usually in ounces.

The device can be oiled while it is in operation and is easily removed to be cleaned or readjusted.

It is claimed as the result of experiments that the accuracy of the instrument is within 2 per cent. of perfection.

HINTS ON HOME PLUMBING

Prevent a plumber's bill this winter by the "stitch in time" method, suggests Miss May Cowles of the Home Economics Department of the University of Wisconsin. "Know something about the plumbing system in your own home

and determine where it might be improved, know where to turn the water off. When the house is to be closed up for a few days or a week during a spell of cold weather, it is wise to turn the water off. Label the cut-off and show every member of the family what to do when the water supply needs to be discontinued.

"Be able to reach every part of your plumbing for repairs. Never allow any pipe to be sealed up in the partition or flooring. If there is any trouble, the plumber should be able to get at it without tearing up a part of the house. A plumber's pump should be owned by every woman. It can be purchased for a few cents and makes it possible to clean out clogged pipes without the aid of a plumber. Be careful not to allow coffee grounds or tea leaves into the sink, as they tend to accumulate in the pipes. Greasy water will also cause trouble.

"Putting a new washer in the faucet is another job the housewife can save money on. Cut off the water supply, unscrew the top of the faucet, unscrew the washer and adjust the new one. Replace the faucet and connect the water supply.

LAUGHS

"I don't know what to do with my son. He's so irresponsible." "Get him on the Weather Bureau."

A little boy who had often heard his father talk about the Civil War, finally asked: "Father, did any one help you put down the Rebellion?"

She—Soldiers must be fearfully dishonest. He—why? She—Well, it seems a nightly occurrence for a sentry to be relieved of his watch.

Parson—Your husband says he always feels so refreshed after one of my sermons. Mrs. A—Yes, a good sleep does refresh one, you know.

"Why do you wear that costume? It looks like half-mourning." "Well, every evening when you come home from the office you complain of being half dead."

Ma—Willie, what's your little brother crying for? Willie—Aw! just because he don't want to learn anything. I just took his candy and showed him how to eat it.

Wife (on her return home)—Have you noticed that my husband missed me very much while I was away, Mary? Maid—Well, I didn't notice it so much at first, but yesterday he seemed to be in despair.

Father (to his old friend's pretty daughter)—Good-by, my dear. I won't kiss you; I have such a cold. His Son (with alacrity)—Can I do anything for you, father?

Mrs. Neighbors—They tell me your son is in the college football eleven. Mrs. Malaprop—Yes, indeed. Mrs. Neighbors—Do you know what position he plays? Mrs. Malaprop—Ain't sure, but I think he's one of the drawbacks.

BRIEF BUT POINTED

A FLAMING BIRD

People in Western Washington are witnessing the remarkable spectacle of birds flying through the air, their backs flaming with fire. This is the optical illusion of the Chinese game bird known as the "fireback," one of the freak species imported from the Orient and recently liberated by J. W. Kinney, State Superintendent of Game and Fish.

The "fireback," the male of which is a beautiful bird resembling the pheasant, is an amazing object when flying. The red-feathered back reflects the sunlight in a flame-like color, giving the impression its body is afire. Other game birds freed in the State are Chinese woodcock, Chukar partridges, sand grouse and bamboo partridges. The gay-colored Mongolian pheasant introduced a few years ago are now seen by thousands.

LIONESS KILLS "SUPER"

An enraged lioness tore or mauled to death an aged Italian, Augusto Palombi, a "super" in a moving picture company, which was filming "Quo Vadis," in Rome, Italy. The entire company witnessed the tragedy.

Several lions and lionesses had been brought into the arena of the circus Mabimus of Nero, which was constructed for the pictures. The lioness became highly excited, jumped over the barrier, landed squarely upon Palombi and began tearing at his flesh and crushing his bones with her huge paws.

Actors and actresses, directors, camera men and "extras" flew in terror from the arena as the beast was mauling its victim. The keepers of the lions beat back the queen of the jungle into her place inside the arena after they had wounded her several times with pistol shots.

A NEW THEORY OF THE ORIGIN OF MERCURY

The origin of the planet Mercury has been to some degree a puzzle to scientists for some time. A recently promulgated theory, which European scientists pronounce "daring, but rather attractive," states that Mercury was once part of the planet Venus.

According to Darwin's theory, the moon was once a part of the earth, and was torn off during a time of high solar tides, which increased the sun's attracting power enormously. Venus and the earth are nearly alike in size, but Venus is much nearer the sun, and if a similar disruption took place the displaced part would be larger than one moon and be torn off with more force—so much so that it would escape from its mother planet's attraction entirely and fall into an independent orbit of its own around the sun.

The fact that Mercury has a long rotation period, according to some scientists, tends to support this theory. Another thing which lends its

support to the idea is the fact that the whiteness of Mercury and that of the moon are nearly alike in degree—their "albedoes," to put it in scientific language, are practically similar.

"PRIVATE DAYZELL"

James M. Dalzell, aged 85, more readily known to many by his pen name, "Private Dalzell," veteran of two wars, writer, patriot, and statesman, died on Jan. 29 in his home in Washington.

Through special action of the Board of Trustees of Washington and Jefferson College last June, Mr. Dalzell received the degree of bachelor of arts 60 years after he left, with other mates in the junior class of that institution, to fight for the Union in the Civil War. His journalistic experiences began when he corresponded with newspapers during that conflict, and his pen was active from then until the time of his death.

He declined promotion in the United Army, preferring to remain in the ranks. After the war he took up the study of law and practiced in Caldwell, Ohio, for 30 years. He served two terms in the Ohio Legislature as a Republican and took part in many stirring political campaigns. He also served during the Spanish-American War in the Hospital Corps. When the World War came he volunteered his services in any capacity, but his age would not allow him to see active service. He devoted much of his time to Red Cross and Liberty Loan drives.

HOW WARM SHOULD A ROOM BE?

The majority of business offices and homes are kept entirely too warm to provide the best possible degree of comfort, health and energy, in the opinion of many competent physicians.

In America we have been accustomed to consider sixty-eight degrees of temperature as about right. And, no doubt, we could all get along very well if this point of temperature was constantly maintained, but as a matter of fact 70 and 72 degrees of temperature is the heat we usually work and live in when indoor in the winter time.

The northern European races cannot be considered more warm blooded than Americans, but their homes are never kept as warm as ours and they seem to enjoy good health and miss nothing by way of comfort. Too much heat in the house is a frequent cause for coughs and colds. Nor is the practice of sleeping in cold bedrooms after spending the day in superheated living-rooms conducive to good health, although it must be admitted that sleeping in well-ventilated bedrooms is much better than spending the night in those that are poorly ventilated.

Medical science has proved that anybody, except the very old, can be comfortable and, perhaps, a little more active in a temperature of sixty-five degrees than in one of seventy-two, and this difference of seven degrees in temperature, statisticians have found out, will save 20 per cent. of the amount of our coal bills.

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

PAPER PROTECTS PLANTS FROM WEEDS

Here's a tip that may help some backyard farmer who is troubled with an excess of weeds and a shortage of hours and inclination to pull them out. Pineapple planters in Hawaii have hit upon the scheme of stretching broad strips of soft brown paper over the soil where the pineapples are planted, and have increased production about 50 per cent., according to a report from that interesting section of the country. The fruit is planted in loose soil which is likewise very conducive for the growth of weeds. It has been found that the paper smothers the weeds and retains the moisture in the soil. The pineapple plants will grow up through the paper.

Waste fibers of sugar cane are utilized in manufacturing the paper. These fibers were discarded as being of no value until some practical and scientific minded person conceived their present use.

FOOTBALL IN BARE FEET

Barefooted football is played regularly in Honolulu. The closing game for the amateur championship of the island of Oahu has just been played, the opposing teams being the Pawaas and allhiwaenas. The Pawaas won by a score of 7 to 3. Both teams played in their bare feet and some wonderful kicks were made. Moiliili field where the game took place was filled with a large and enthusiastic crowd who cheered the players. All of the kicks were squarely made upon the toes. One drop kick was for 35 yards and the ball went true over the bar.

Playing football barefooted is done by the amateur players of Honolulu. The teams are made up of a mixture of races, embracing Hawaiian, Japanese, Koreans, Filipinos, Porto Ricans and Portuguese.

On account of the mildness of the climate there the average boy does not put on shoes until he is nearly out of his teens. Summer and winter he goes barefoot. For this reason their feet become hardened to rough usage and kicking the football with the bare toes is not looked upon as any unusual accomplishment. Upon every playground scores of young boys may be seen almost any day during football season, kicking the big ball around with their bare feet.

PAPER THAT WON'T BURN

A recent development in the field of paper manufacturing has been brought about by an Eastern paper company, who have, says *Popular Mechanics*, perfected a process for producing paper that will not burst into flames even when subjected to a high degree of continued heat.

The material chars and becomes black under the application of fire, but never quite burns. Moreover, written or printed matter remains fairly legible even after the paper has been held in the fire for some time.

The fireproofing process does not interfere with the proper absorption of ink, so that the paper can be used for correspondence or printing purposes in the same manner as ordinary paper.

This invention greatly lessens the danger from spontaneous combustion or from carelessly thrown away matches or cigarette and cigar stubs. Valuable records or other documents which are prepared on this stock run a greatly lessened risk of complete loss in case of fire.

Several other uses of the fireproof paper suggest themselves, among them covers for magazines, serving as an insulation to the pages within; fireproof curtains of various sorts and special rugs or carpets to minimize the danger of fire in offices or homes.

The material is also used in the protection of valuable paintings and fabrics during such times as they may not be on view or in use.

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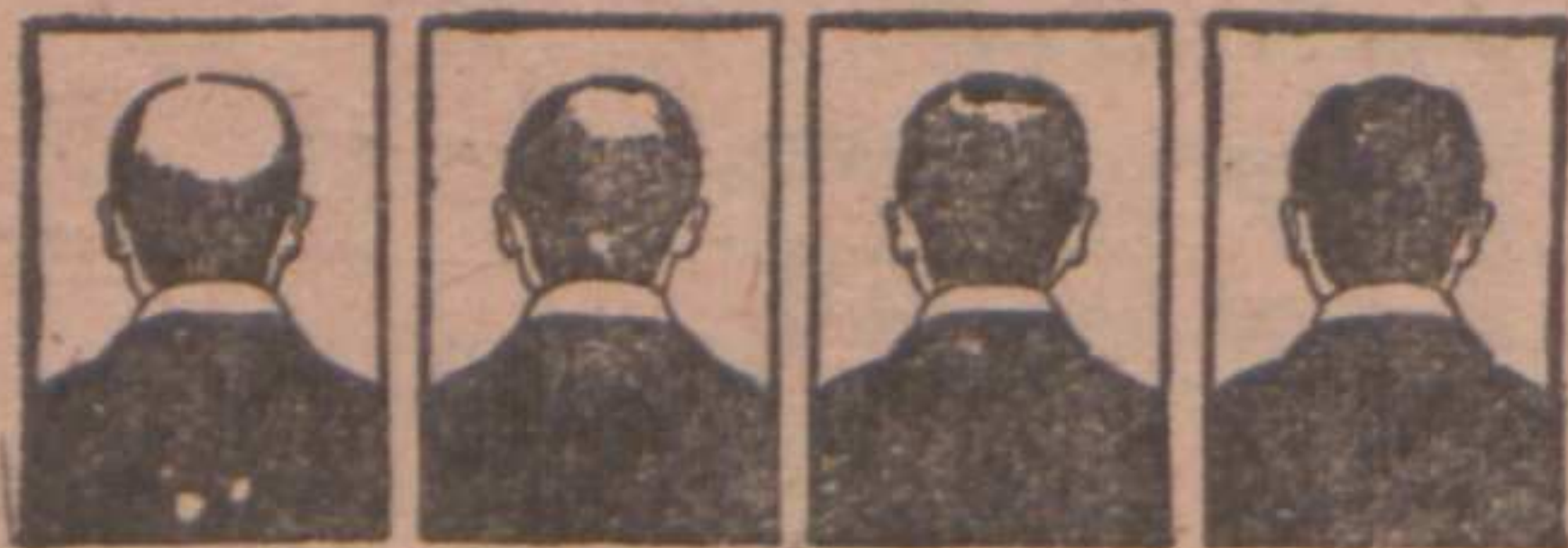
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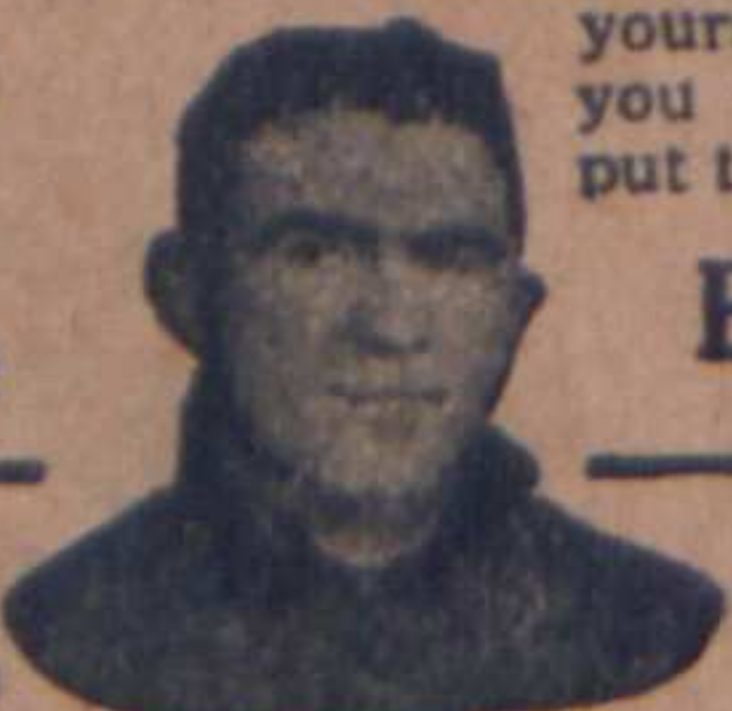
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